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# **HINDU STUDENTS IN A FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ENQUIRY**

**PAUL OLIVER**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
Council for National Academic Awards for the degree of Doctor of  
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## ABSTRACT

This is an ethnographic study of a sample of Hindu students in a Further Education college. The students are all following a course leading to the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education. The data consists of transcripts of informal interviews and of classroom teaching situations; and is analysed from the perspective of an interpretive paradigm. The purpose of the study is to reveal the methods used by the students in reaching an understanding of their own social world. The study seeks to construct a series of world views which reflect the ways in which the students perceive their own sense of reality. The research attempts to explore the views of students on several areas including religion and culture, their feelings about the education system, and their aspirations for employment and a career.

Generally speaking, research studies in the sociology of education tend to focus on the schools sector, and it is the intention of this research to redress the balance somewhat in the direction of Further Education. Moreover, studies in multicultural education often describe their samples in non-specific ways such as "Asian students" or "ethnic minorities", and place little emphasis upon the social influences of specific religion and culture. By investigating a particular religious group it is hoped to encourage more studies which place an emphasis upon the importance of religion in defining the social life of Asian people.

The study of this sample of Hindu students suggests that there exists a specifically Hindu perception of the world, and that the maintenance of this is of importance to the students. The students appeared to have a profound desire to succeed in the educational system, and to apply that success to particular vocational contexts. An apparently strong motivation to achieve something of value in life was sustained in part by a sense of parental support and interest. The students did not appear to be preoccupied with the racism which they encountered in society. It was also noted that the female students tended to reject firmly the traditional Hindu gender roles. Generally there was a tendency for these young people to develop considerably greater proficiency in spoken rather than written English. The thesis concludes with a reflexive account which seeks to describe the particular perspectives and approaches of the author in arriving at an understanding of the data.

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**DRAMATIS PERSONAE: INDICATING GENDER (M or F)**

Students starting college in 1986

Hari	M
Mohan	M
Narain	M
Pushpa	F
Rajesh	M
Ramesh	M

Students starting college in 1987

Balwant	M
Kumar	M
Laxmi	F
Purshottham	M
Ramila	F
Ratilal	M
Shanti	M
Subhash	M

Students starting college in 1988

Amritlal	M
Niru	F
Rajendra	M
Satya	M

**SYMBOLS USED IN TRANSCRIBING CONVERSATIONAL DATA**

<b>go--</b>	word started, but not completed
<b>. . .</b>	pause in speech (one or two seconds)
<b>. . . . .</b>	longer pause (three or four seconds)
<b>( )</b>	description or comment by the researcher on the context
<b><u>no</u></b>	emphasis
<b>NO</b>	capitals indicate loud volume
<b>(hh)</b>	at the end of a word, indicates aspiration - usually laughter during vocalising a word
<b>Surrey College*</b>	fictional name
<b>+ + +</b>	incomplete utterance

Other abbreviations or symbols are clearly indicated in the text.

## TRANSLITERATION OF HINDU TERMS AND USE OF DIACRITICAL MARKS

The standard system of diacritical marks employed for Indian languages is used in the text. The following is a brief guide to pronunciation. A more detailed discussion of Sanskrit phonetics may be consulted in A L Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, (New York, 1977), pp506-508.

a	pronounced as <i>o</i> in <i>come</i>
ā	pronounced as <i>a</i> in <i>far</i>
i	pronounced as <i>i</i> in <i>pin</i>
ī	pronounced as <i>ee</i> in <i>seem</i>
u	pronounced as <i>u</i> in <i>pull</i>
ū	pronounced as <i>oo</i> in <i>pool</i>
ṛ	pronounced approximately as <i>ri</i>
e	pronounced as <i>e</i> in <i>bed</i> but rather a longer sound
o	pronounced as <i>o</i> in <i>rote</i> but with a longer sound
ṅ	a guttural sound, which may be pronounced as <i>n</i>
ñ	a palatal sound, which may be pronounced as <i>ny</i>
ṇ	a cerebral sound, which may be pronounced as <i>n</i>
ṭ and ḍ	are 'hard' sounds, as <i>t</i> and <i>d</i> in English
t and d	are 'soft', aspirated sounds
ś or ṣ	may be pronounced as <i>sh</i>
ṁ	may be pronounced as <i>ng</i> as in <i>ring</i>
ḥ	is an aspirated sound
v	after a consonant is pronounced as <i>w</i>

## **ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT**

<b>'A' Levels</b>	<b>General Certificate of Education, Advanced level</b>
<b>BTEC</b>	<b>Business and Technician Education Council</b>
<b>CGLI</b>	<b>City and Guilds of London Institute</b>
<b>CPVE</b>	<b>Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education</b>
<b>CRE</b>	<b>Commission for Racial Equality</b>
<b>CSE</b>	<b>Certificate of Secondary Education</b>
<b>DES</b>	<b>Department of Education and Science</b>
<b>FE</b>	<b>Further Education</b>
<b>FEU</b>	<b>Further Education Unit</b>
<b>GCE</b>	<b>General Certificate of Education</b>
<b>GCSE</b>	<b>General Certificate of Secondary Education</b>
<b>NATFHE</b>	<b>National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education</b>
<b>'O' Levels</b>	<b>General Certificate of Education, Ordinary level</b>
<b>TVEI</b>	<b>Technical and Vocational Education Initiative</b>
<b>YTS</b>	<b>Youth Training Scheme</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to construct an ethnographic account of a group of students in a Further Education college during the period 1986-1989. The students are Hindus and they were all studying on the same course: the Certificate of Pre-vocational Education (CPVE). This is a one-year full-time course. As research data was gathered over a period of three years it was possible to remain in contact with some students after they had left the course. The CPVE programme caters for school-leavers of between 16 and 17 years of age who would like to learn more about the different vocational possibilities available to them, while extending their general education and qualifications.

The college is situated in a northern industrial city which for the purpose of this study will be called Churchtown. The college is a Tertiary college and as such provides all the non-advanced Further Education in Churchtown. The secondary schools provide education from 11 to 16 years, and all students transfer to Churchtown Tertiary College for GCE Advanced levels or vocational courses.

During the period of this study the researcher was employed as a full-time teacher at this college and thus had to combine these two roles.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to state the aims of the study, and then to describe the context and location of the research. This includes Churchtown and its environs, the Hindu community in Churchtown and some elements of its religion and culture, and the college and its CPVE programme. It is hoped that this background information will help to clarify the research data in subsequent chapters.

The nature of this introduction is essentially descriptive rather than analytic. Issues such as the difficulties of combining the roles of teacher and researcher are discussed in the

subsequent chapter on methodology. The thesis concludes with a reflexive account which relates the researcher's personal background and perspectives, and the interaction between these and the research study.

## **AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The general aim of this research study is to construct an ethnography of the behaviour and attitudes of a sample of Hindu students in a Further Education college, and moreover to reveal and analyse their perceptions of the society in which they live.

Under this general aim are subsumed a wide range of more specific aims and objectives, but before discussing these it is worth reflecting upon one particular dimension of this statement of intent.

The original conception of the study was that it should concentrate upon a particular religious and cultural group. Hindu students were selected for a complex of reasons discussed further in the reflexive account, but the focus upon a single ethnic group implies a particular assumption. This is that in some important dimensions Hindu students interact differently with their social environment compared with other religious or cultural groups. In a sense, this notion constitutes a general hypothesis which permeates the whole of the research, and to which a considerable quantity of the subsequent data is relevant. While it seems reasonable to suppose that different Asian cultural groups may have experiences such as racial disadvantage or discrimination which in nature are of comparable quality; the unique aspects of Hindu ethnicity imply a world view which may have significant qualitative differences worthy of exploration.

There has been a distinct tendency in the literature on multi-cultural education to describe students as either Asian or Afro-Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> This rather simplistic distinction ignores the great variety of national, cultural and religious backgrounds, and



the resulting diversity in perspectives which one may reasonably suppose to exist.

A M Baker argues that

"to talk about Asians as a single category can be misleading and overlooks the existence of cultural subgroups."<sup>2</sup>

In a recent extensive review of research into the education of pupils of South Asian origin, M J Taylor and S Hegarty suggest that although the issue may seem rather obvious,

"it is necessary to draw attention to it however since so many research studies are based on presumed homogeneous Asians."<sup>3</sup>

They further state that:

Religious, language or caste distinctions though more important in terms of how Asians perceive themselves than nationality almost never feature as research variables.<sup>4</sup>

It is hoped that in some small way this research may remedy this deficiency.

The general aim stated above includes two more specific aims. These are to describe the Hindu students within two broad parameters: firstly within the context of their lives as Hindus and as inheritors of a particular religious tradition; and secondly to reveal their perceptions of what it is to be a further education student. These two aims subsequently embrace a wide range of more specific objectives.

From the point of view of religious background it is hoped that the research will reveal various aspects of the lives of the Hindu students including:

- i) participation in events at the local Hindu temple;
- ii) the extent to which the young people help to sustain worship at the family shrine;
- iii) the extent to which Hindu ethics prevail in their conscious-ness, and influence their daily lives;
- iv) relationships with parents, temple priests, and other adults in the Hindu community;
- v) reactions to social norms prevalent in the Hindu community;
- vi) the interaction between the traditional Hindu value system as represented by parents and grandparents, and that of the younger generation;
- vii) the degree of knowledge which the students possess about India, Gujarāt, and their traditional Hindu culture, as exemplified by, for example, the *Bhagavad Gītā*<sup>5</sup>;
- viii) relationships with Muslim, Sikh and indigenous young people;
- ix) experiences of racism and discrimination;
- x) the degree to which their mother tongue, Gujarāti, functions as a vehicle for enriching and sustaining religious culture.

This is not intended as an exhaustive list of research objectives for the study. It is anticipated that the research process will reveal unanticipated data which can be used to formulate testable hypotheses. Nevertheless, the above objectives constitute the planned core of the research into aspects of ethnicity and were generated from the researcher's experience of Hindu society. It seems important, for example, to assess the validity of generalisations such as those made by a Hindu interviewee in a series of discussions broadcast on Radio Four:

Gujaratis, being a business community, are by nature orthodox in their approach to life. They're also very peace-loving, very law-abiding, and deeply religious, and above all a very non-violent people. The nature of business is such that unless these conditions prevail they cannot thrive.<sup>6</sup>

The second main area of interest for the research is the way in which the students interrelate with a large college community and how they react to the norms and values of that institution. In relation to this it is hoped that the study will reveal some features of the following:

- i) the educational and vocational ambitions of the students;
- ii) the attitudes and strategies with which they approach their studies;
- iii) the relationship between their own and their parents' perceptions of the education system;
- iv) memories of their school days and comparisons with life at college;
- v) reflections upon the organisation of college life and the degree to which they view their participation in it as being worthwhile;
- vi) observations on the existence, or not, of discrimination and racism within college society;
- vii) the attitudes of the students towards social issues such as unemployment;
- viii) the extent to which they enter into the social life of the college;
- ix) the students' perceptions of what would constitute a suitable career for them;  
and
- x) the reasons for which they select certain courses and options within college.

The dilemma when starting qualitative research is to identify aims and objectives with sufficient clarity that the researcher has a provisional framework within which to work, but to ensure that there remains the responsiveness to unanticipated data which is one of the strengths of this approach.

There is no precise answer to the degree of initial structure to adopt. J P Wiseman suggests that:

In the qualitative approach there is minimal originating organisation. The method of data gathering (unstructured interviews or observations), as well as methods of actual handling data, reflect this. Thus in data gathering, topic and form are inextricably bound together because they develop together.<sup>7</sup>

Different researchers will interpret 'minimal' in different ways. It is implicit in the preparation of the above aims and objectives that they shall not remain immutable, but be adapted in the light of the evolving process of data collection and analysis. S J Ball described the process of amending objectives as follows:

One result of such an orientation to the field, indeed it is an expectation of ethnographic study, is that the process of fieldwork is marked by changes in the direction, focus and scope of the research objectives. These changes, some short-lived and unprofitable, some profound, are accompanied by the problem of false trails, dead-ends and the collection of much useless or irrelevant data.<sup>8</sup>

It is to be hoped that some objectives will be amended. It is hoped that unanticipated data will arise - for therein lies the fascination of research.

## **CHURCHTOWN AND ITS HINDU POPULATION**

Churchtown is a northern industrial city with a population of approximately 122,000.<sup>9</sup> Its manufacturing base has traditionally been the textile industry, but the decline of the latter during the last few decades has led to the development of a more mixed industrial infrastructure including light engineering, agricultural products and high technology. Churchtown is the commercial and financial centre of the region.

There is a thriving city centre with large industrial complexes, a polytechnic and an impressive museum and library of great architectural interest.



During the period when the textile industry was expanding there was extensive house building to provide accommodation for industrial workers. This took the form of red-brick terrace housing which occupies most of the area within half a mile of the city centre.

Many of these terraces are purely functional in design with front doors opening to narrow pavements on cobbled streets. Other terraces are grander and more decorative in style.

This inner-city area is busy and densely-populated. It is an area of corner grocery shops, rather begrimed public houses, small parks and childrens' play areas. Many ethnic minority families live in the numerous parallel streets, and although the area may not be very attractive from a conventional point of view it has a vitality and sense of community which mitigate the less-desirable characteristics.

The outlying suburban areas of Churchtown are in sharp contrast. Here are rows of neat semi-detached houses, large brick-built Victorian terraces, and some palatial residences surrounded by high fencing and well-established trees. In these areas the public houses are newly-built with large car parks, and people tend to shop in hypermarkets rather than corner shops. The streets are quieter. Residents appear to live their lives in their homes rather than in the outer community.

Churchtown is a multicultural city. Approximately 9% of the population are from ethnic minority groups, which contrasts with the corresponding figure of about 3½ % for England and Wales as a whole.<sup>10</sup> The largest religious group in Churchtown are the Muslims.<sup>11</sup> They have migrated principally from Gujarāt, although a significant group comes from Azad Kashmīr. The Hindu community also comes largely from Gujarāt, either by direct migration or after an intermediate period in East Africa. Both Muslims and Hindus from Gujarāt speak Gujarāti as their mother tongue. There are also small Hindu communities from Panjāb and Āndhra Pradesh. They speak Panjābi and Telugu respectively.<sup>12</sup>

Gujarati remains the prime medium of communication for most Indian migrants in Churchtown. It is the official language of the state of Gujarāt and one of the 14 regional languages recognised in the constitution of India. It is written in a script which has evolved from *Devanāgarī*, the script used both for classical Sanskrit and modern Hindi.<sup>13</sup> Gujarāti is the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools in Gujarāt and migrants to this country have usually had a formal education in the language.<sup>14</sup>

Although there is no particular segregation of the Muslim and Hindu communities in Churchtown, there is a tendency for Muslim families to predominate in areas to the east and north-east of the city centre, and Hindus to the south. The Muslim community has constructed two purpose-built mosques, while Hindus have a large cultural centre and temple which caters for the largest part of the community, and a separate temple for the Swaminārāyan Hindus - a group with a distinctive theology and religious perspective.

The settlement of Hindus in Churchtown began in 1958. The original migrants were men from the districts of Surat and Broach in Gujarāt. This is a fertile agricultural region between Baroda in the north and Daman in the south, inland from the Gulf of Cambay.

M H Lyon notes that

'the general population of Gujarat is more literate and politically aware than those of most other states, and rural-urban differences seem less pronounced.'<sup>15</sup>

The early migrants had usually experienced a high school education up to the ages of 15 or 16 and many possessed an enterprising business ethos. This was certainly not the stereotype of an unsophisticated rural people migrating to an industrial society of unfamiliar complexity. Lyon further comments that the Gujarātis he met in Lancashire and Yorkshire were:



X  
remarkable not only for their business aspirations but for the unusual cosmopolitan knowledge and communal means by which they were able to achieve their goals. Investments were planned not only by be deferment of gratification over a period of time, but also by means of an international perspective which enabled children to be educated where the provisions were best, family members to be placed where opportunities offered, and credit to be mobilised where carefully planned enterprise seemed to warrant investment.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, the people who lived on the coastal plain of Cambay had a tradition of travelling overseas.<sup>17</sup> This was somewhat unusual for orthodox Hindus, for whom a sea journey outside India normally resulted in ritual pollution. Many Gujarātis were also attracted across the Arabian Sea to the expanding colonial economies of East Africa.

The pattern of settlement in Churchtown followed a familiar sequence, with the male family members obtaining jobs and houses, and when financially independent, being joined by their wives and children and other relatives. By the mid-1960's there were perhaps 100 Hindu families in Churchtown and this period saw the establishment of the Hindu Gujarāti Society of Churchtown. Families contributed money, and an office and library were established in a private home. The emphasis within the society was originally upon linguistic and general cultural ties rather than specifically religious connections.

The late 1960's and early 1970's saw the size of the community increased by Gujarāti-speaking Hindus from East Africa. On 6 June 1967 Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania formed the East African Economic Community with its administrative centre at Arusha, and the subsequent 'Africanisation' policies undermined the Indian community and the major contribution it had made to the economy of East Africa. Five years later, on 4 August 1972 President Amin of Uganda ordered all Asians who held British passports to leave the country within three months.<sup>18</sup>

The increased size of the Churchtown community resulting from the expelled East African Hindus, was the motivating factor in trying to find a permanent location for the Hindu Gujarāṭi Society. A disused primary school to the south of the city centre was selected as being of a suitable size, but the purchase price of £17,500 was beyond the means of the society. However, after an extensive fund-raising programme, involving major donations from Hindu groups in London, Leicester and Birmingham, and grant of £500 from the Gulbenkian foundation, the property was finally purchased in February 1975. It is near the end of a narrow residential street and next to the modern primary school which has replaced it.

Although the property was badly in need of internal reconstruction, the first priority for the community was the consolidation of the centre as a place of worship. The members of the Society belong to a tradition which reveres Kṛṣṇa and his favourite consort Rādhā as the main objects of devotion. Kṛṣṇa is a heroic figure for whose historical existence there seems to be some basis. The name is used of an individual in early scriptures such as the *Upaniṣads*<sup>19</sup> and Kṛṣṇa is the central figure of legends from all parts of India. In theological terms he is the eighth *Avatāra* or incarnation of the God Viṣṇu, the creative source of the universe who works continuously for the benefit of worldly beings.

The community ordered statues of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā from Jaipūr in the state of Rajasthan. A brāhmaṇ<sup>20</sup> accompanied the statues to England and remained for some time at the centre for the official opening later in 1975. The statues occupy the central position in the shrine room at the cultural centre.

The entrance to the cultural centre must have changed little since the building was used as a school. A small functional sign states the nature of the building. A casual passer-by would not observe anything unusual about the building yet the interior sustains a culture very different from that of the indigenous residents of the surrounding streets.

Immediately outside the front door the visitor walks over a concrete slab on which when wet has been traced the symbol ॐ. This is *Om*, the symbolic representation of the Hindu universe.<sup>21</sup> The visitor enters a large reception hall whose walls are covered with notices and posters - mostly in Gujarāṭi, though some are in English. There is a long wooden shoe rack, since as in all eastern religions it is the invariable custom to remove shoes before entering the shrine room.

The latter opens out through double doors to the right and was originally a large classroom. The room is comfortably carpeted in red, extremely clean and scented with incense. The high walls are adorned with numerous posters and paintings depicting gods, goddesses and mythological figures.

The nearest wall is occupied by a series of shrines - to Gaṇeśa in the form of an elephant; to Hanumant the monkey-god; and to Śiva. The central shrine is reserved for Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. The latter statues are approximately one metre tall and of white porcelain. They stand on an elevated dais backed with rich crimson velour decorated with golden stars. Kṛṣṇa stands cross-legged, garlanded in flowers and playing the flute. At his feet is a statue of a white cow,<sup>22</sup> and leaning against his right shoulder is a shepherd's crook. Rādhā is also garlanded and is draped in red gilded silk. Both figures wear tall golden crowns and Kṛṣṇa's is topped with peacock feathers. On a platform below the feet of the statues are several offerings and smaller objects of religious significance. A bowl of fruit, smouldering incense sticks, a coconut, a small golden statue of Gaṇeśa, a silver container of pink flower petals, and two conch shells. The conch was an important musical instrument of ancient India. It was blown as an invocation to a deity at ceremonial occasions and before battle.

On the opposite side of the entrance from the shrine room is a large meeting hall dedicated to the memory of Mahātmā Gāndhī.



The spirit of tolerance exemplified by Gāndhī is sustained at the cultural centre. The centre is seen first and foremost as a social and community centre for the Hindu community, and secondarily as a temple. Hindus of any sect may freely attend the centre,<sup>23</sup> and there is no requirement that people pray at the shrines during their visit. Hinduism is regarded as a very personal religion and most families have a small shrine in their homes where they carry out short daily devotions.

Older people use the centre as a meeting place for a cup of tea and a chat, while on several evenings in the week the Gāndhī Hall becomes a sports club for teenagers, with darts, badminton, table tennis and other sports being provided. However, events for boys and girls are held on separate evenings.

During these sports sessions English is probably heard more frequently than Gujarāṭi and no pressure is placed on teenagers to speak Gujarāṭi. Relatively few teenagers visit the shrine room during their stay.

The ideal of religious tolerance is further demonstrated by the gatherings which are held from time to time to honour the memory of important world figures. These are termed 'condolence meetings' at the centre and have been held for example in memory of Dr Zakir Hussein - former President of India and a Muslim; Lord Mountbatten - last Viceroy of India; and for Pope Paul VI at which a local Roman Catholic priest delivered a sermon.

Since its establishment the Society has been able to stabilise its financial situation. The audited accounts for the year ended 31 May 1984 show that the freehold temple property was valued at almost £90,000, and that the Society holds investments and deposits to the value of nearly £30,000.

There is a substantial and regular flow of funds into the organisation. The same accounts show that the vast majority of income comes from donations by the Hindu community, either at special religious festivals or into the collection boxes at the temple. The total for such income in the above accounts was approximately £24,000. Members of the Hindu community are also encouraged to become Life Members of the Society by paying a contribution of £50.



Greater financial security has enabled the society to expand its activities. A monthly magazine is published which carries articles of interest to the community and outlines forthcoming activities. It is called *Samaj Dīp* - which translates approximately as 'Community Light'. The magazine was launched in April 1980 and has been in continuous publication since. The printing is carried out as a donation by members of the executive committee. About 600 copies of each edition are printed, and distributed free of charge among the community.

Members of the Society have been eager to involve themselves in charity work and this has been by no means exclusively for the Hindu community. Cultural evenings have been held in support of Save the Children Fund, and sponsored walks have raised money for the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

The Hindu Society has always sought to attract well-known visitors and politicians to the temple. David Waddington MP, Timothy Raison MP, and Michael Foot MP have all visited the centre. The Hindu community interacts in many different ways with members of the local Churchtown community. A folk dance group of Hindu girls in traditional dress gives exhibitions at schools, hospitals and in aid of charities. The society receives many requests from organisations who wish to learn more of Hindu culture and religion. Groups of young nurses, social workers and police officers often visit the centre as part of their education in aspects of a multi-cultural society. The links with educational

institutions are particularly strong. Several lecturers at the tertiary college incorporate a visit to the centre into the curriculum for their students. This applies particularly to the Preliminary Certificate in Social Care, Nursery Nursing, and Pre-nursing courses.

To the rear of the centre, restructuring and extension work has been carried out to provide another hall, the Gītā Hall, and several smaller rooms. This accommodation is used especially for mother-tongue teaching. Classes are held at weekends for all levels of proficiency and students can sit the Institute of Linguists examinations. One of the rooms leading off the Gītā Hall is equipped with a television and video. Elderly people use this room during the daytime as a meeting place and to watch Asian films.

Although the Hindu Gujarāṭi Society caters for the needs of the majority of Churchtown Hindus, a sect with a more strictly defined concept of religious devotion has its temple about half-a-mile away nearer the city centre. This sect is the Swaminārāyan movement and the temple is located in a much less thriving area than the Gujarāṭi Society. Many of the houses of the area are in a state of decay. Several houses close to the temple have no roof and appear to be uninhabited. Large detached houses with overgrown, walled gardens are converted into bedsit flats. Many windows in the surrounding maze of narrow streets are boarded up. The Swaminārāyan temple is at the end of an unmaintained cul-de-sac. Double wrought-iron gates lead into a spacious gravel parking area in front of a large detached house. The front door is painted bright yellow. The ground floor windows are covered with steel security mesh. Above the door is the sign 'Swaminarayan Hindu Temple - Shree Akshar Purushottam'. The latter phrase is approximately translated as 'dwelling place of the Divine'.<sup>24</sup> Slightly above the sign a small flagpole protrudes carrying a triangular white silk flag with the emblem . The latter is the sectarian mark of the Swaminārāyan movement. The  signifies devotion to Kṛṣṇa and thus to Viṣṇu, and the • is a symbol of reverence for Rādhā.



In the complex, inter-connected pattern of worship that is Hinduism, there are many common aspects between mainstream Hinduism and the Swaminārāyan movement. The latter is, however, characterised by three main features. Firstly, the sect owes spiritual allegiance to a specific religious teacher. The present teacher and leader of the movement is the sixth in a succession of leaders which commenced with the movement's founder, Shree Swaminārāyan, who was born in Uttar Pradesh in 1781. Secondly, the movement adheres to a fairly formal code of conduct which was written by its founder and called the *Shikshapatrī*.<sup>25</sup> Thirdly, from its inception the movement has had an abiding concern with social reform in India.

Shree Swaminārāyan was clearly an impressive religious teacher and there are in existence contemporary accounts of his meetings with Bishop Reginald Heber and Sir John Malcolm, the then Governor of Bombay.<sup>26</sup>

Swaminārāyan selected his successor just before his death in 1830, and this practice has been followed by successive leaders.<sup>27</sup> Pramukh Swami, the present leader, was ordained as such at the age of 29, during a large assembly in May 1950 at Ahmedabad.<sup>28</sup> Since then most of his time has been spent travelling from temple to temple in India meeting devotees and officiating at prayer meetings. He also regularly visits Swaminārāyan centres outside India, in East Africa, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. He comes to the temple in Churchtown approximately once a year and stays in a specially-prepared room on the first floor.

The most precise statement of the religious perspective of the movement is to be found in the *Shikshapatrī* of Swaminārāyan. This consists mostly of instructions for the conduct of daily life, together with statements of religious doctrine. The injunctions of the *Shikshapatrī* are, broadly speaking, adhered to by followers today. There is a prevailing emphasis upon non-violence and vegetarianism:

None shall kill animals such as goats, etc., even for the purpose of performing sacrifices or for propitiating a deity; for, non-violence in itself is avowedly held as the highest ethical code. None shall ever commit homicide for any object, be it for women, wealth or even a Kingdom.

None shall ever eat flesh, be it the remnant of offerings in a sacrifice; none shall drink liquor, or any intoxicating beverage even if it has been offered to the deities.<sup>29</sup>

A recurring theme throughout the text is that of the separation of the sexes. During the period of Swaminārāyan's ministry, the practices of female infanticide and of *satī* - the self-immolation of widows - were common in Gujarāt. Both Swaminārāyan and leaders of the British administration inveighed against these customs. Women clearly occupied a singularly inferior position in the Indian society of the time, and Swaminārāyan's solution to this problem was to advocate the separation of the sexes within many of the movement's activities. Thus women had their own meetings at the temple conducted by female spiritual leaders. Arrangements of this kind continue to the present day. The argument has always been made that this separation enables women to control their own affairs, and to be free of the risk of exploitation by men. However, it must be said that the senior administrative and religious roles in the movement are filled by men.<sup>30</sup>

Members of the sect wear a *tilaka* mark on their forehead. In the case of male devotees this is the same sectarian mark as on the flag. The U is in yellow and the • mark is in red or orange. From observations at the Churchtown temple this is by no means a universal custom and during the period of the research only one student at the college wore the mark regularly. Female devotees only wear the round *tilaka* and then it is usually adopted only by married women.<sup>31</sup>

The movement has always attached importance to social reform. Swaminārāyan himself tried to reduce the significance of *varṇa* and *jāti* groupings.<sup>32</sup> This has been achieved to some extent in the modern Swaminārāyan movement, although R B Williams records that

in India low-caste devotees wear only the red *tilaka* mark and not the full mark worn by upper-caste members.<sup>33</sup> These may well be local variations however because in 1981 Pramukh Swami instructed all temples that individuals of any caste could be initiated as *sādhus*.<sup>34</sup>

The interior of the Churchtown temple is much less ostentatious than that of the Hindu Gujarāti Society. Many of the rooms of the house are empty or have minimal furniture, but everywhere is clean and painted with white emulsion. At the end of the entrance hall is a small kitchen for preparing communal meals, and to the right is the shrine room which would originally have been a large Victorian sitting room.

The room is painted in pastel shades and crimson wall to wall carpeting covers the floor. Three shrine pictures at one end constitute the focal point of the room. These are colourful but in simple gold frames. The central picture is of Swaminārāyan and his successor Swami Gunatitanand. They are sitting on separate couches facing each other and appear to be engaged in debate. Their heads are surrounded by misty white halos and both wear garlands of white, red and green. Swaminārāyan is the most richly dressed. He wears tight scarlet trousers and a gold and crimson jacket and hat.

To the left of the central shrine is a picture of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, and to the right portraits of Pramukh Swami and the last three *gurus*. A low wooden barrier about 30 cm high separates the congregation from the shrine pictures. On the barrier are placed several small devotional items, incense sticks and food offerings such as pieces of fruit.

Without a specific and detailed survey it is difficult to be sure of the size of the movement in Churchtown or of the degree to which it might be expanding. It has been suggested by Swaminārāyan members that approximately 100 families are active participants. This would account for about one quarter of all Hindus in Churchtown.



Churchtown thus has an active Hindu community which clings to its traditions and maintains close links with its cultural origins in India. Yet Hinduism is but one facet of the rich religious diversity in Churchtown. There are large Roman Catholic and Muslim communities for example, contributing to the varied multi-culturalism of Churchtown society. It is this diversity which is reflected in the student population of Churchtown Tertiary College and which helps to make it an interesting educational environment.

### **CHURCHTOWN TERTIARY COLLEGE AND THE CPVE PROGRAMME**

The tertiary college which serves the Churchtown area is located in the middle-class suburbs to the north of the city centre, close to major motorway links. The college was formed in 1974 by combining the Churchtown Sixth Form College and the non-advanced further education courses at Churchtown Technical College. During this period of reorganisation, the latter institution was designated a polytechnic.

The tertiary college occupies a large open site adjacent to two comprehensive schools. The college consists of a number of large functionally-designed buildings each housing one or more departments. It is approached by a long drive with extensive car parks on either side. The college operates under Further Education (FE) regulations and is designated a Group eight college.<sup>35</sup> There are approximately 2,800 full-time students, and 14,700 part-time students.

All students in Churchtown who are over the age of 16 and want a non-advanced FE course, attend the tertiary college. There are 15 comprehensive schools which cater for the age range 11-16, and whose pupils progress to the college. It is interesting to note that of these schools, six are Roman Catholic voluntary-aided schools, and although some pupils from these schools attend the tertiary college, there is also near the town

centre, a Roman Catholic voluntary-aided FE college. Many other more distant schools also send some students to the college.

Churchtown Tertiary College provides a wide range of courses. There is a choice of 40 different General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects and 42 advanced level General Certificate of Education (GCE) subjects. Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) awards are offered in a variety of vocational areas including Hotel and Catering, Business Studies, Science, Health, Computer Studies, Art and Design, Leisure and Entertainment, Construction and Engineering. There are full or part-time courses in almost every vocational area appropriate to the local employment market. The college provides day-release courses on request for local employers and for managing agents of local youth training schemes. There are close ties with Churchtown Polytechnic. The first year of a combined studies honours degree course is taught at the college. Students then progress to the polytechnic for the second and third years. The students on this course are normally part-time adult students.

There are over 300 full-time lecturers at the college. Two of these lecturers are from ethnic minority groups. One is a Sikh and one a Muslim.

The student population shows considerable ethnic diversity, reflecting the nature of Churchtown's overall population. During the period of the research study approximately 8% of the full-time student population were Muslims and 4% were Hindus. These figures were obtained from the tutorial lists for full-time students by identifying Muslim and Hindu names. Such a procedure cannot of course be used to identify Afro-Caribbean students.

Churchtown College was one of the first tertiary colleges to be formed. Exeter, the first, had been established in 1970, to be followed by several other colleges in Devon and Somerset. Indeed it was R Parker the chief education officer of Somerset during the



early 1970's who contributed much to the analysis of a role for the tertiary college. He outlined the main features of tertiary colleges as:

- i) a wider range of courses offering greater flexibility of choice in the number and type of subjects taken;
- ii) the chance to break down the barriers which have tended to exist between academic and applied studies;
- iii) the chance for young people to work in a more adult atmosphere and within a social framework which will be developed in the light of present-day experience and be unrestricted by any traditional attitudes; and
- iv) the concentration of skilled teaching staff and expensive equipment.<sup>36</sup>

Several of these characteristics applied initially to Churchtown college, notably the adult atmosphere more akin to that of a polytechnic in some respects, and also the concentration of quite considerable educational resources. However, in terms of the delivery of the curriculum, the college was very traditional.

From its inception the college was organised along hierarchical departmental lines. There were 15 departments grouped in four faculties - those of Technology, Community Education, Humanities and Science. Faculties operated as semi-autonomous units and the heads of faculties had considerable power over curricular, staffing and administrative issues. This departmental system tended to encourage an entrepreneurial approach on the part of heads of departments and faculties, since the grading of departments and hence the status of heads, depended upon student hours taught.

The result of this for prospective students at enrolment was that attempts were made to attract them to a particular course within an individual department. Inevitably a pre-designed course would not be ideal for every student, but very rarely was there an



opportunity to combine facilities or educational modules across departments and to construct a course suited to individual requirements. For reasons such as these many tertiary colleges have abandoned the departmental system and adopted to varying degrees a matrix system of organisation which seeks to identify a range of college functions and to integrate these in a system of vertical and horizontal lines of responsibility. As M Preedy writes:

A matrix system is argued to encourage more co-operative attitudes and to provide a more effective means for promoting curricular flexibility, adequate pastoral provision for students and closer integration between the various areas of the college's work.<sup>37</sup>

A new principal was appointed to the college in January 1987 and immediately initiated a review of the organisation of the college. A consultative process commenced which was to lead over a two year period to the adoption of a matrix structure. One of the purposes of the reorganisation was to help dissolve the arbitrary dividing line between so-called academic and vocational courses. This was made clear in the submission on restructuring which was presented to the academic board of the college at the beginning of 1988, and which was prepared by the principal and two vice-principals:

Tertiary colleges, though, have a great opportunity to support school-leaver or adult students who wish to make choices within a curriculum which runs across the artificial divide between general and vocational education. Recognising the strengths of both traditions, many students in tertiary colleges make choices which keep options open, combining academic and vocational qualifications which both equip for employment and qualify for higher education. All students, of whatever mode of attendance or course choice, will enjoy parity of esteem in the college.<sup>38</sup>

The students who are the subject of this thesis are all studying on the same course - the Certificate of Pre-vocational Education (CPVE). This programme of study embodies to a high degree the concept of unifying academic and vocational education. The background to the decision to select this course and its students for the research is discussed in

detail in the chapter on methodology and in the reflexive account of the research process. The CPVE, however, does offer an interesting case-study in the evolution of many of the issues which are at the focus of current debate in tertiary colleges.

The CPVE was developed in May 1983 by the Joint Board for Pre-Vocational Education which had been set up as a joint venture by the Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) and the City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI). The CPVE was intended to be a new type of provision to concentrate on:

meeting the needs of the many 16 year-olds of all abilities who would benefit from a further year of full-time education but who require a programme of learning and development neither conventionally academic nor purely vocational to help them prepare for adult life and work.<sup>39</sup>

Sir Edwin Nixon, the first chairman of the Joint Board for Pre-vocational Education identified the client group who it was assumed would benefit from the CPVE:

We are concentrating on the 100,000 or so young people, from the full ability range, who decide to remain at school or college in full-time education but who do not wish to take the GCE 'A' level examinations or follow a purely vocational course.<sup>40</sup>

By September 1984 the concept of CPVE was sufficiently well developed for pilot schemes to be organised in 52 different educational institutions - 31 schools, 16 FE colleges and five sixth-form colleges.<sup>41</sup> By this stage it was becoming possible to define the curriculum more precisely and to describe exactly what theorists and practitioners considered to be the nature of pre-vocational education.

The central component of the curriculum was seen by the Joint Board to be a range of 'core competences' taught through a programme of vocational studies. The core competences were considered by the Joint Board to be a combination of skills, attitudes



and knowledge, and were grouped into ten categories.<sup>42</sup> The core competencies were not to be taught as discrete areas but were to be integrated as far as possible with the remainder of the course and in particular the vocational studies. Thus, if a student was following a CPVE programme centred largely around Business Studies, the acquisition of numeracy skills would according to this perspective, take place naturally during a study of interest rates, book-keeping procedures, and elements of banking. The core areas were also assumed to be of general applicability:

The CPVE core is described in terms of those experiences and competencies which are believed to be essential for successful adult life, including employment (hopefully with training) and further vocational or academic education. Core competences are broadly-based and widely applicable. In pre-vocational education, vocational or core competencies often equate - both consumer and salesperson require the same numeracy skills.<sup>43</sup>

The vocational studies available in a CPVE programme are grouped together into five areas,<sup>44</sup> and each vocational area can be studied at three different levels of complexity. These are described as 'Introductory', 'Exploratory', and 'Preparatory', in order of increasing difficulty. The different levels also represent an increasing degree of specialisation in a particular vocational area. Thus a student interested in social care might commence his/her programme with an Introductory module in Services to People, followed by an Exploratory module in Health and Community Care, followed by one of a range of more specific Preparatory modules such as Child Care, Nutrition, Human Development, Care of the Handicapped or First Aid.

Other features of the CPVE are 'Additional Studies' which provide time for community activities, leisure, sports or perhaps taking an extra GCSE subject; and 'Work Experience' in which each student must participate for at least three weeks.

From the very beginning of the concept the CPVE sought to emphasise certain types of learning experience. Learning was to be based as far as possible upon the needs and interests of students as perceived by the students, rather than the teachers. It was accepted that this would inevitably involve a degree of curriculum negotiation. In addition, activity-based learning was viewed by the Joint Board to be essential for the success of the programme. Through project and assignment work of various kinds it was anticipated that students would gain confidence and learn to take responsibility for their own learning.

The assessment process was also seen by the Joint Board to be critical for the success of the scheme. All students were to undergo a process of 'formative assessment' which would be carried out at regular intervals (usually weekly) for the duration of the course. During review sessions which normally would take place with a tutor on a one-to-one basis, students were asked to reflect upon the progress which they felt they had made, their achievements in the past week, and , for example, the particular core skills which they had used. These reflections were entered on a profiling grid or form and signed by tutor and student. It is suggested that this formative assessment process helps to monitor student progress effectively, and to assist students in identifying their own weaknesses, as well as confirming successes in their own eyes and in the eyes of their tutors.<sup>45</sup>

The CPVE commenced at Churchtown Tertiary College in September 1985 and approximately 80 students were enrolled. The curriculum and course organisation were based very much upon the generalised model outlined above. During the first year the course was based at an annexe of the college in the city centre, but was moved to the main campus in September 1986.

A significant feature of the course was the very high proportion of ethnic minority students - averaging between 55-70% during the period of the research study. Muslim



students predominated over Afro-Caribbean and Hindu students. Throughout the whole college, only the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies approached this concentration of ethnic minority students.<sup>46</sup>

The actual numbers of students from different ethnic groups on the CPVE programme are set out in tabular form below. Numbers of male (M) and female (F) students are given in each category. The three years from 1986 to 1989 constitute the period of data collection for this research.

Academic Year	Muslim		Hindu		Sikh		Afro-Caribbean		Chinese		Indigenous		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1986/87	18	10	5	1	0	0	3	2	1	0	14	13	41	26
1987/88	22	4	6	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	11	7	41	14
1988/89	15	6	3	1	2	0	2	3	0	0	15	9	37	19

The Joint Board originally conceived the CPVE as being a programme of pre-vocational education, rather than a course, and that it would be available for students with a wide range of academic backgrounds. However, the experience at Churchtown rapidly began to parallel the situation found nationally by the Further Education Unit (FEU) in its review of the first two years of the CPVE:

There is a real possibility that CPVE will become the course in schools that sits below the course for those 'good enough' to repeat or take GCSE or 'A' levels. The 'market place' seems to be determining a place and a value for CPVE which is different from that envisaged by the Joint Board. Very few students wanted a pre-vocational course; most felt they knew their vocation and wanted to acquire the skills and 'O' levels perceived necessary to enable them to pursue it.<sup>47</sup>

It has been the case for the duration of the research that the majority of students enrolling on the CPVE programme at Churchtown did so because they had failed to gain

entry to a higher-level course or a course with specific entry requirements. As CPVE was never conceived as having entry requirements of any kind, it has fulfilled in many cases the role of a safety net for students, offering an assured place for a year in FE, when all else has failed.

The CPVE course is based in a set of three rooms with adjacent staffroom near the main entrance to the college. The rooms are large and modern, and one is equipped as a multi-skills craft workshop to enable design work to be done in wood, plastics and other materials. The rooms were created originally by sub-dividing a large workshop area and the partition walls are fairly thin resulting in some noise and conversation being transmitted. The central location of the rooms results in the CPVE students being on view more than most other students. Only a short walk away, on the other side of the main entrance is the student amenities block, the facilities of which would be the envy of many polytechnics. There are cafeteria facilities on two floors, a student shop and students union office.

Many CPVE students are taught for part of the week in other areas of the college, but still regard these rooms as their base. The teachers who are mostly involved with CPVE use the adjoining staffroom.

This then is the context of the research. A course for school-leavers of modest academic attainment and one which attracts a relatively high proportion of ethnic minority students. A large purpose-built tertiary college in a city with a varied cultural and religious background.



## CHAPTER 1     METHODOLOGY

The subjects of this study are the Hindu students on a CPVE programme during a period of three years. Normally a student leaves the CPVE course after one academic year, and therefore different students provided data in successive years. Some students continued at the college for one or two subsequent years and this enabled further data to be gathered concerning their progress through the educational system. Other students left college during the research period and were contacted later to discover how their hopes and aspirations had developed.

This study is written within the framework of an interpretive paradigm and it is worthwhile reflecting upon how and why this choice was made. The methodology which is employed in a research study must, if it is to be appropriate, satisfy two main conditions. Firstly, it should be a methodology with which the researcher feels at ease - not only in the sense of being professionally competent in its employment, but in having a sense of empathy with the theoretical bases of that methodology. This personal issue is more appropriately considered in the reflexive account at the end of the thesis.

Secondly, the methodology must provide a suitable framework within which to analyse the aims and objectives, to collect relevant data, and to develop theory grounded in that data. This chapter is concerned with these latter issues. The selection of methodology is discussed first. This is followed by sections on the theoretical bases of the interpretive paradigm, the methods of collecting data, and finally the generation of sociological theory from that data.

### Selection of Methodology

The aims and objectives of the study, enumerated in the previous chapter, are primarily concerned with the Hindu students' response to the social world around them. This response involves such categories as religious belief systems; ethical views; personal relationships; ambitions and career aspirations; and family relationships. It was an early

assumption of the research study that the Hindu students would show some reticence in discussing these issues, and in this would probably not be different from other human beings. It was also assumed that they would not willingly commit such personal views to writing. The personal nature of the research data seemed to indicate that quantitative methods would be less appropriate. Moreover, little work had previously been done in this area, and there was no foundation of research upon which survey methods could build. It was therefore assumed that there would be data available in a number of unanticipated areas, and one of the prime purposes of such research must be to delineate these areas. The uncertainty of the research field therefore caused the researcher to favour qualitative methods.

The argument can be made of course that a combination of such methods is always likely to lead closer to reality. R King expresses this view clearly:

Small-scale direct observations, what is usually called ethnography, allow us to generalise about a lot of things a few people did. It would be foolish if we were to limit ourselves to a method that prevented our generalising on a wider scale. Larger samples, using questionnaires, provide information on a few things about a lot of people, and so enable generalisations about a range of micro-structures.<sup>1</sup>

While accepting this general proposition it is considered that this particular study offers such a large quantity of potential data that a qualitative study alone is justified. It is possible that this could then form the basis for a quantitative study or one employing a variety of approaches.

Besides taking the decision to work within a qualitative framework, it is necessary to assume a particular theoretical orientation to the research. A prime focus in the aims and objectives is the nature of individual identity with regard to the Hindu students, and in particular with the processes by which the students construct their identities. The



interpretive paradigm is seen as the most appropriate theoretical perspective because of the importance attached within it to a study of the processes by which social members construct their world. G Burrell and G Morgan outline the essential features of the paradigm:

Their theories are constructed from the standpoint of the individual actor as opposed to the observer of action; they view social reality as an emergent process - as an extension of human consciousness and subjective experience. Insofar as a wider social environment is accorded ontological status, it is regarded as the creation and extension of the subjective experience of the individuals involved.<sup>2</sup>

This perspective views the social world as existing through, and because of, the behaviour, relationships and identities of members. Therefore, a study of the behaviour and relationships of Hindu students should reveal something of the reality of their social world.

The interpretive paradigm also emphasises the importance of understanding the everyday and common-sense social world of members. H Garfinkel stresses the significance of such work:

Although sociologists take socially-structured scenes of everyday life as a point of departure they rarely see, as a task of sociological inquiry in its own right, the general question of how any such common sense world is possible. Instead, the possibility of the everyday world is either settled by theoretical representation or merely assumed.<sup>3</sup>

This type of focus makes it a particularly interesting perspective from which to view the Hindu students since so little is recorded of their everyday world. They clearly have views about the college and relate to the institution and its members on that basis. They have views about their fellow students and methods by which they interact with them. The conceptualisations and categories which the Hindu students employ to construct their

social world and the methods whereby they make that construction are the proper subject matter for the interpretive approach.

The latter, however, is a complex theoretical field, and as it forms the basis for the research, merits an examination.

### The Theoretical Basis of the Interpretive Paradigm

This paradigm embraces several more specific approaches such as phenomenological interactionism and ethnomethodology, but the essential unity of the paradigm lies in an approach which seeks to understand the social world primarily from the viewpoint of the social actors involved. The paradigm can be viewed as having evolved from the German idealist tradition, and the notion that the individual can apprehend reality through an intuitive, spiritual understanding rather than a more positivistic approach. Although this perspective rests to a great extent on the work of I Kant it is perhaps convenient to start with some of the concepts of M Weber.

One of Weber's fundamental philosophical positions was that reality is not self-evident; it needs to be interpreted before it can be understood. This interpretation is the function of the sociologist. Similarly, on the human level, one cannot make assumptions about human behaviour and the reasons behind it. A fundamental task for the sociologist is that of constructing 'meanings' - explanations of behaviour which shed light upon the significance and purpose of human action. Weber wrote extensively upon the nature of 'meaning' but his major contribution to the development of this paradigm was in asserting that in no sense can 'meaning' be objectified:

In no case does it refer to an objectively 'correct' meaning or one which is 'true' in some metaphysical sense. It is this which distinguishes the empirical sciences of action, such as sociology and history, from the dogmatic disciplines in that area, such as

jurisprudence, logic, ethics, and aesthetics, which seek to ascertain the 'true' and 'valid' meanings associated with the objects of their investigation.<sup>4</sup>

In seeking to interpret 'meaning' Weber developed his well-known concept of an 'ideal-type', which for any behavioural event, seeks to hypothesise a purely rational alternative which can be used as a yardstick to understand and interpret the actual behaviour. But here, Weber stressed that he was not asserting a purely rational basis for his sociology:

It certainly does not involve a belief in the actual predominance of rational elements in human life, for on the question of how far this predominance does or does not exist, nothing whatever has been said. That there is, however, a danger of rationalistic interpretations where they are out of place naturally cannot be denied.<sup>5</sup>

A contemporary of Weber, the American social philosopher George Herbert Mead, contributed to the development of this paradigm by discussing the ways in which the individual interacts with the social environment to develop a notion of the 'self':

One must, of course, under those conditions, distinguish between the experience that immediately takes place and our own organization of it into the experience of the self. One says upon analysis that a certain item had its place in his experience, in the experience of his self. We do inevitably tend at a certain level of sophistication to organize all experience into that of a self.<sup>6</sup>

Although focusing particularly on the interaction between the individual and society, Mead shared with Weber an emphasis on interpretation by the social actor, rather than a view of society having a deterministic effect on the individual.

The work of Weber was extended by the Austrian sociologist A Schutz. In the first place, the latter held Weber in considerable esteem:



Now in what does Max Weber's great achievement consist? In the first place, he was one of the first to proclaim that the social sciences must abstain from value judgements. He took up the battle against those political and moral ideologies which all too easily influence the judgement of the social scientist, whether this influence is conscious or not.<sup>7</sup>

However, Schutz considered that Weber's discussion of the meaning of social action was too simplistic and needed elaboration. Schutz felt that the plurality of possible meanings which can evolve in social interaction is so complex that Weber's reduction to simply the social actor and social observer, overlooked the complexity of reality.

To be sure, Weber distinguishes between the subjectively intended meaning of an action and its objectively-knowable meaning. But he recognises no further distinctions along this line and pays as little attention to the ways in which an interpreter modifies meaning as he does to the conceptual perspectives in which our fellow human beings are given to us.<sup>8</sup>

Schutz felt that the way to an understanding of social meaning lies through an analysis of the commonly-accepted ideas employed by individuals in making sense of everyday life.

For in the simple process of living we directly experience our acts as meaningful, and we all take for granted, as part of our natural outlook on the world, that others too, directly experience their action as meaningful in quite the same sense as we would if we were in their place.

Now, if social phenomena are constituted in part by common-sense concepts, it is clear that it will not do for sociology to abstain from a scientific examination of these 'self-evident' ideas.<sup>9</sup>

Besides founding much of his work upon that of Weber, Schutz was also influenced by the philosopher E Husserl. The latter was interested in the contrast between the thought-processes of the scientist and those of the majority of people who possess no extensive training in science or logic.



In the subscientific everydayness of natural life everyone believes that he has knowledge of himself and of human beings; he may be ever so humble in judging the perfection of this knowledge, certain that he often errs, but he knows that this knowledge can be improved; and everyone believes in a similar fashion that he has knowledge of the world, or at least of his proximate surroundings.

Positive science says that this is naive and that it, positive science, achieves true knowledge of the world through its scientific methods.<sup>10</sup>

But Husserl felt that it is the positivist who is actually naive. Both Schutz and Husserl were in agreement in considering that the proper subjects for scientific enquiry in the social sciences are the everyday, taken-for-granted assumptions of people.

But all the knowledge belonging to positive science, all its questions and answers, all its hypotheses and confirmations, stand or move upon the ground of the pregiven world; the world is the constant presupposition; the question concerns only what the world is, what is found to belong to it in the movement of induction from the known into the unknown.<sup>11</sup>

Husserl is a phenomenologist in the sense that he believes in essential features which are characteristic of human consciousness. In order for us to experience the world we need to appreciate the 'essences' of the phenomena around us. This process is essential to our understanding of the world, and our ability to make sense of our surroundings.

Husserl describes his theory of essences as an 'a priori psychology'.

This exhibits in a new way the profound difference between mathematics, between every a priori science of the world, and phenomenology as a priori psychology, that is, as the theory of the essence of transcendental subjectivity.<sup>12</sup>

Schutz adapted this idea of Husserl and argued that the way to grasp the 'essences' of human consciousness is to examine the nature of the common-sense concepts held by individuals.

Schutz was largely a theoretician, and did relatively little empirical work to demonstrate how his ideas could be translated into practical research methods. However, he was certainly aware of the issues involved in gathering data on social action and meaning. Indeed, he offers advice on methodology, advising the observer to adopt indirect methods such as:

He can search his memory for similar actions of his own and, finding such, can draw from them a general principle concerning the relation of their in-order-to and because- motives.

But it may be that the observer lacks significant information about the person he is observing. His last resort will then be to try to infer the in-order-to motive from the act by asking whether such and such a motive would be furthered by the act in question.<sup>13</sup>

The aforementioned ideas, which can be described as phenomenological, are firmly rooted in the German intellectual tradition, but it was not for some time that Schutz's views were encapsulated in a specific sociological perspective which gave rise to a range of empirical studies. A significant event in this was the publication in 1967 of Harold Garfinkel's work *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. The opening sentence of this book makes it clear that Garfinkel is writing in the tradition of Schutz:

The following studies seek to treat practical activities, practical circumstances, and practical sociological reasoning as topics of empirical study, and by paying to the most common-place activities of daily life the attention usually accorded extraordinary events, seek to learn about them as phenomena in their own right.<sup>14</sup>

One of Garfinkel's central achievements is to construct a conceptual framework for ethnomethodology - a perspective which has become significant within the interpretive paradigm. One of the main concepts is that of the 'indexical' nature of verbal expressions used by social actors.

I use the term 'ethnomethodology' to refer to the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of organised artful practices of everyday life.<sup>15</sup>

Garfinkel uses the concept 'member' to replace the 'actor' of Schutz and he argues that events, interactions, and indeed individual words, have a changing significance depending upon the context. That is, they are 'indexical' to the situation in which they are produced. Members must, on each and every occasion, employ various analytic methods at their disposal, in order to interpret and make sense of the unique indexical meaning of a particular utterance, verbal exchange or occurrence.

One might take the example of differences of opinion between two people. Each difference of opinion should be regarded, according to Garfinkel, as indexical, and therefore of a nature specific to that particular context. A social member might apply various categorising processes to define the difference of opinion now as a serious argument; but perhaps later, on a different occasion, only as a discussion. This categorising process enables the member to make sense of what is observed or of that in which s(he) participates. It is a distillation and summary of the diversity of human experience.

In this way, Garfinkel views individual members as deriving their own 'objective' statements about the world. Such statements are objective in the sense that they are produced by rational analysis and that the types of analytic methods employed are available to the member to apply to different situations. The clarification and elucidation of these 'members' methods' is the real subject for ethnomethodology.

Garfinkel describes these methods as having an 'accomplished' sense. He means by this that the production of summaries of everyday events is indeed an accomplishment for



the member, but it is an accomplishment which is unproblematic, because although it is characterised by considerable standardisation it is scarcely recognised for what it is.

Garfinkel describes the achievement of members' methods as:

... an awesome phenomenon, for in its unknown ways it consists of members' uses of concerted everyday activities as methods with which to recognise and demonstrate the isolatable, typical, uniform, potential repetition, connected appearance, consistency, equivalence, substitutability, directionality, anonymously describable, planful - in short, the rational properties of indexical expressions and indexical actions.<sup>16</sup>

Another central concept used by Garfinkel is that of the 'reflexive' relationship between social action and the context of that action. The point he is making here is that just as the member's action is partly a function of the surrounding circumstances and context, so also the situation is influenced by and affected by, the action. Not only are the two interconnected but the member accepts the social context as 'given' and 'real', without questioning its apparently objective existence. Members do not see the social world as created by themselves, as a product of the use of available and standard methods. It is the role of the sociologist to identify, analyse and describe these methods, and yet therein lies an essential paradox. The sociologist must utilise these very members' methods in relating to the subjects of research, and in forming an understanding of the context of the social action which s(he) is studying. For these very important reasons, the sociologist must reflect upon and analyse the presuppositions and perspectives which s(he) brings to the research context, and which constitute in part her/his member's methods in explicating that context.

There is also another hidden methodological danger for the sociologist in the use of the concept 'member'. In Garfinkel's terms:

Members' accounts are reflexively and essentially tied for their rational features to the socially organised occasion of their use.<sup>17</sup>



These 'socially organised occasions' are seen by members as a 'factual reality', and the implicit assumption between members is that they all perceive the occasions in the same way. Indeed, if one individual demonstrates a discrepancy in the perception of an occasion, then members do not alter their understanding of the social world. They generate a plausible explanation for the difference in perception exhibited by that individual.

The danger for professional sociologists is that they too are 'members', part of a 'sociologists' culture' or, in Garfinkel's terms, subscribe perhaps sub-consciously, to a range of members' methods characteristic of sociologists. These could easily obscure and distort the possibility of an objective interpretation of the social world. It remains essential that sociologists strive constantly to step outside the bounds of any members' methods to which they may without realising it, subscribe.

These potential methodological difficulties have been noted by other writers, notably A V Cicourel who in 1964 published a critique of contemporary sociological research methods.<sup>18</sup> In his discussion on using interview methods in sociological research he points out some important aspects of the respondent-interviewer dynamic:

The well-conceived interview, complex as it may be, must have its roots in the categories of common-sense thinking, for without a knowledge of such roots, the interviewer could not establish the necessary community for conducting his research. This means a recognition and understanding of how the respondent-interviewer interaction involves overlapping social worlds.<sup>19</sup>

There is clearly emerging here an interpretive orientation. Cicourel continues:

The respondent's and interviewer's stock of knowledge at hand and their definition of the situation will determine their mutual reaction to the questions posed.<sup>20</sup>

It is a central function of the methodology in this research study to continually reflect upon the perspective of the researcher and of the everyday, normally unexamined, strategies used to construct his social world. Some of these reflections are discussed in the data analysis chapters, while the issue is extensively treated in the reflexive account at the end of the thesis.

A telling analysis of this same issue is provided by P L Berger and T Luckmann in their 1966 publication, *The Social Construction of Reality*. This seminal work which owes much to the influence of Schutz, discusses amongst other issues, the ways in which counter-realities and counter-identities can remain hidden from the knowledge of the larger community. They particularly discuss the treatment and definition of social outcastes, and give the interesting example of Gāndhī's support for the 'untouchables' of India:

Maximally, it will no longer be an easy matter to recognise anybody's identity - for if lepers can refuse to be what they are supposed to be, so can others; perhaps, so can oneself. If this process appears fanciful at first, it is beautifully illustrated by Gandhi's designation of harijans, that is, 'children of God', for the outcastes of Hinduism.<sup>21</sup>

Gāndhī redefined his own caste role by choosing to clean out latrines - normally the task of the 'untouchables' outside the normal caste system. In this manner he sought to demonstrate to his followers that they need not be trapped within the confines of a narrow social stratum and the accompanying ethical imperatives. They need not be what they are supposed to be. They could produce a counter-definition of their own identity.

The implications for this research programme are clear. A researcher cannot make assumptions about the manner in which individuals define themselves. A researcher cannot assume that he is fully clear about how he defines his own identity.

A relatively recent development within the interpretive paradigm has been the research by H Sacks and his co-workers. This work has taken the form of the analysis of everyday conversation. Sacks is particularly interested in the creation of members' descriptions of phenomena, and the fact that these descriptions of the social world are usually meaningful to the recipient of the description. Moreover, Sacks is interested in the underlying patterns, consistencies, and essential orderliness of conversational patterns. Members structure their conversations in predictable patterns which underlie an apparently chaotic structure. As Sacks and his associate E Schegloff have written:

If the materials (records of natural conversations) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodically produced by members of the society for one another, and it was a feature of the conversations that we treated as data that they were produced so as to allow the display by the co-participants to each other of their orderliness, and to allow the participants to display to each other their analysis, appreciation and use of that orderliness.<sup>22</sup>

Sacks postulates various concepts to help understand the production of this 'orderliness' and one of these is 'category'. Here he is focusing on the multitude of different descriptions we give to individual people, or which people use to describe themselves. For example, a teacher may be categorised as 'colleague', 'boss', 'mate', 'darts player', 'motor-cyclist', 'father', 'academic', 'part-time student', amongst a very large number of alternative categories. Sacks argues that members methodically select a category for an individual on a particular occasion and that this category selection assists both the members and the categorised individual in understanding and accepting each other's social world.

Sacks extends this concept by pointing out that many activities are 'category-bound'. That is they are normally associated with a particular category. Thus, if one enters a staffroom and sees an individual marking exercise books, one places the person in the



category 'teacher'. On the other hand, if we observe another individual fixing a shelf to the staffroom wall, we might wish to reserve judgement about whether to use the category 'teacher' or the category 'caretaker'. Other visual and oral clues would be sought.

Similarly, an individual's social identity can provide an analysis of the activities in which members normally and reasonably expect an individual to be engaged. Thus it is not an accepted social activity for the category 'caretaker' to supervise classes of children when the teacher is absent.

The notion of 'category-bound activities' is also utilised by members as the basis for moral judgements about fellow members. For example, the types of sanctions and punishments which are negotiated between the members of the category 'teacher' form the basis of a complex agreement as to what is reasonable in a particular circumstance. Moreover, the system of definitions employed has an underlying logic and regularity. Although the range of possible punishments may be very wide, the regulatory rules adopted by members preclude for example, physical injury to a pupil although a hard push against a wall may be considered reasonable. These regulatory rules remain generally undiscussed, unstated, and not in need of explication. The interesting process is that by which the rules are created.

At this stage, it is interesting to apply these theoretical ideas to a short piece of conversation, in order to demonstrate a form of analysis to be used in the research. The following hypothetical exchange is typical of the context of this research study.

A male Asian student knocks on the staffroom door and enters.  
He is smiling slightly. There are two male teachers in the room.  
One teacher speaks:

Teacher: "Look who's here!" (said with a sarcastic tone).  
"Where were we yesterday then? Out floggin' jeans?" (teacher raises eyebrows, but has slightly twinkling eyes).

Student: "No Sir, it was jumpers and skirts." (smiling broadly).



The first aspect to note about this exchange is that it is strongly indexical to the social context. If, for example, we imagine hearing the exchange taking place in an adjoining room, it may be that the listener would get an impression of considerable antagonism between the two speakers. The sarcasm in the teacher's voice would be prominent. On hearing the Asian accent of the second voice, the listener may categorise the teacher as an individual who disliked Asians. He might assume that the teacher was referring to the student working on a market stall, and was seeking to denigrate this activity. Further, he may assume that this is the utterance of a racist teacher who is seeking to ridicule a student who has been absent on the previous day. It is clear that if the conversational exchange was heard in this way, then the teacher could be placed in several different categories depending upon the perceptions of the member listening; and also, importantly, depending upon the degree of previous knowledge which the listener has of the teacher in question. Little or no previous knowledge will lead to categorisation based primarily upon the perception of the listener. If the listener knows the teacher well and has therefore assigned him to various categories on previous occasions, then the degree of reflexivity inherent in the occasion is greatly increased. The listener will probably interpret the utterance as being category bound, and characteristic of the teacher acting as a member of that particular category.

It may be, for example, that the listener knows the teacher as an active left-wing member of his trade union, a frequent participant in anti-apartheid marches, and a militant worker for black rights. The apparently harsh nature of the exchange is immediately mollified, and the listener interprets it as a piece of fun, or a joke. The member does this automatically without being able to see the student, or needing to see the student. The teacher's utterance is thus strongly indexical to the context. In a different social context it could become a racist jibe, poking fun at the type of work habitually followed by some Asian families.

If the listening member were able to watch the social exchange and thus obtain visual clues about its nature, then from the point of view of the listener, the reflexive possibilities are increased. Even if he knows little or nothing about the background of the teacher, the facial expressions of the speakers may be sufficient to indicate a friendly exchange.

It is interesting to reflect briefly upon the response of the student. The student is asked, in effect, if he was absent on the previous day for the unacceptable reason of working on a market stall. The student, however, answers in an evasive and ambivalent manner, which leaves open several different logical interpretations. It is possible that he is simply correcting the teacher on a point of fact - admitting that he was working, but clarifying the point that he was selling skirts and jumpers rather than jeans.

On the other hand, we might assume that the student's answer was in fact a non-response. The student was using the teacher's mild sarcasm against him, but responding in a humorous way which did not at all attempt to factually answer the question. Within this interpretation, we do not know what the student was selling, but we know he is tacitly admitting his absence. He is using humour to de-fuse the situation. The utterance is reflexively affecting the social context. The latter has been transformed from being a situation of potential reprimand to one of informal banter and humour. The student has accomplished this skillfully and we realise that in some ways it no longer matters that the student was absent for a day. In a way it would be inappropriate to admonish the student now. By the structure of the opening remark, the teacher has implicitly decided to overlook the offence.

This constitutes only a partial analysis of this brief exchange, yet the complexity of everyday conversation is immediately clear. What is remarkable is that social members do not engage in detailed reflection or conscious analysis in order to perform verbal

operations such as this. They simply describe such events to themselves. These descriptions have meaning and value to members. They are produced in straight-forward ways which are generally unrecognised and unconsidered by the individuals themselves. What is more, social members assume that others interpret the situation as they do. If another teacher were to ask the question, "Why did he treat that student so harshly?", a social member would not question his own analysis of the humour inherent in the situation. Rather would he propose reasons why this comment was the product of an over-sensitive teacher, or one who had no sense of humour.

Talk and conversation have furnished sociologists with a great deal of data during the development of sociological research. Such talk has provided descriptions of the social world through the perception of individuals, and this data has enabled conclusions to be drawn about social forces and processes. The methods used by individuals to make sense of the world and to structure the talk which gives rise to the descriptions are central to the interpretive approach. As K Leiter writes:

The properties of everyday conversations constitute a sense of social structure, for they are a description of peoples' experience of conversations as patterned, orderly phenomena. As such, they constitute the sense of social structure; the orderly presence of talk is used by people to assure themselves that the other person is talking about an intersubjective social world and not some private world within his head.<sup>23</sup>

A key role for the interpretive sociologist is to reveal the hidden rule structures which individuals use to talk about that intersubjective social world.

### The Collection of Data

This thesis describes research undertaken at Churchtown Tertiary College, the same institution at which the researcher was employed as a teacher. During the period of data collection, the researcher had administrative responsibility for several college courses,



one of which was the CPVE. He was responsible for the interviewing and admission of students, the general course curriculum, student progress through the course and the maintenance of adequate standards of student behaviour and academic attainment. The teaching timetables of FE teachers tend to vary from year to year depending upon college requirements. The researcher taught as many as 10 hours per week on the CPVE course in some years, and only two or three in others, depending upon various factors such as staffing levels and the teaching requirements of other courses. He often took on extra teaching in order to facilitate the collection of data.

One of the first methodological issues to be confronted in this research programme was whether it was justifiable to conduct research within the institution in which the researcher was a teacher. The prime advantage of doing this was the easy access afforded to suitable research subjects, and the established relationships with the 'gate-keepers' of the college such as heads of department and the college principal. In fact, the college management unequivocally supported the idea of the research, and this is an important consideration when deciding on a research programme in an institution. There was not only easy access to Hindu students, but there was also a ready justification for the presence of the researcher at any location in the college. The researcher as teacher was accepted in a variety of roles and contexts by students in the college. An important supporting factor for this approach was the minimal degree to which the social ecology of the college environment was disturbed by the research. A number of other advantages are summarised by G Griffiths who carried out research in the same Sunderland comprehensive school in which he taught:

First, there is an intimate knowledge of the context; secondly, a knowledge of contextual features or events; thirdly, teacher-researchers are in a position to view both the obvious links between situations and events and also to understand the more subtle or diffuse links; and finally, they are also in a position to assess the implications of following particular avenues of enquiry.<sup>24</sup>

Griffiths thus argues that the teacher-researcher starts off at some considerable advantage over a researcher who is a stranger to the particular context. This advantage is not simply a matter of being more familiar with the geography, organisation and personalities of the institution; but consists of the potential to perceive connections and relationships through a long-acquired familiarity with staff and students and college procedures.

However, this very familiarity can be a major disadvantage in interpretive research. This particular methodology depends for its effectiveness upon analysing the nature of everyday and taken-for-granted speech and interaction. An excessive familiarity with a setting can make it very difficult for a researcher to distance himself from the research setting in order to reflect objectively upon the conversational exchanges. In fact, the researcher is so much a part of the members' interacting processes, that he ceases to analyse his own sense-making procedures. W F Whyte gave expression to such difficulties in the methodological appendix to his study of a slum district in an American city:

I had to balance familiarity with detachment, or else no insights would have come. There were fallow periods when I seemed to be just marking time. Whenever life flowed so smoothly that I was taking it for granted, I had to try to get outside of my participating self and struggle again to explain the things that seemed obvious.<sup>25</sup>

The difficulty of taking advantage of previously-gained familiarity with a setting while sustaining a detached, objective research approach, is a significant problem and demands continuous vigilance from the researcher. On balance, however, it was considered that a freshness of approach could be sustained in the research, because the latter was concerned with the investigation of a culture within a culture. It was considered that the investigation of Hindu students and their culture within the context of an English educational institution would encourage the maintenance of a dispassionate approach,

and tend to prevent lapses of objectivity. As a non-Hindu it would be less easy for the researcher to cease analysing his own sense-making processes, as he came into contact with alternative perceptions of the world.

There was considered therefore some justification in pursuing the role of teacher-researcher, but there was the further issue of whether to gather data from students on a course with which the researcher was already involved. There remained the possibility of seeking Hindu students on courses in a different department, and it would certainly have been possible to identify an adequate number of respondents on a single course.

The disadvantage of selecting CPVE students was principally that of the difficulty of maintaining a detached attitude. However, there are several advantages, and these are fundamentally related to the question of access to students.

It is important in interpretive research to maintain the natural qualities of the research setting. In a totally new environment the researcher attempts to achieve this through a long period of participation in the culture - what one might term 'going native'. The CPVE course offered some of the advantages of this approach. Firstly, the researcher was able to arrange to conduct tutorials with, or teach, CPVE groups whenever it was necessary to gather new data. This was not perceived as strange by the students because they saw him as having a legitimate interest in the course. Moreover, the role as course co-ordinator facilitated interaction with the students in a variety of situations. These included chatting informally with groups of students on a corridor; meeting their parents and relatives; helping students in non-curricular matters; counselling students; and offering careers advice and help. All of these teacher roles were considered normal and legitimate by the students and thus enhanced the opportunities for data collection.



There is the further ethical dimension here that the students gain considerably from such interactions, which thus serve valuable ends other than the pursuit of research objectives. The Hindu students have, in effect, had much more individual teacher attention and help than is normally the case. It was important to the researcher that the students should also benefit from the research process.

If students in other departments had been chosen as subjects it would have taken considerable time before a relationship would have been achieved whereby casual conversation could take place in coffee bars or recreation areas around college. This situation already existed for the researcher with respect to CPVE students. This is considered to be a major advantage for the research project. D H Hargreaves, in his study of a secondary modern school experienced considerable difficulties in establishing such rapport;

Simultaneously, I was trying to get to know the boys in an informal way. At Lumley this was particularly difficult to achieve. Many of the usual avenues of access to the boys were closed to me. During the short breaks in the middle of morning and afternoon school, the boys were sent out into a small playground. Two teachers were on duty in case of trouble. Often, therefore, I was forced to spend as much time talking to the teachers as to the boys during these ten minute breaks.<sup>26</sup>

It was thus considered that there was considerable justification in carrying out research at Churchtown Tertiary College and with Hindu students on the CPVE programme. From the foregoing account it is clear that there were sufficient opportunities for formal and informal contact with the students, and thus for the collection of data. The main issue which follows from this is whether any single method of data collection is superior to any other, given the aims and objectives of the research programme.

From the beginning it became clear that certain approaches were likely to be less helpful than others. This view was based upon extended experience as a teacher and initial attempts at recording data.

Further Education classrooms are very different educational environments from the classrooms in a secondary school. An important difference from the point of view of the interpretive sociologist is that to a large extent, the informal chatter and conversation of a secondary school is much less prevalent in FE. There is thus rather less spontaneous talk available as raw data.

In order to circumvent this difficulty the researcher often contrived to initiate discussions among the students on subjects which were relevant to the research programme. For example, in a communications class the researcher asked some students to prepare short talks on their religion and cultural background and to lead a short class discussion afterwards. The class found such activities very interesting and by tape recording and later transcribing the talks and discussions the researcher was able to gather very useful data.

The interview was particularly attractive as a research tool because of the intention to explore ideas and feelings which were likely to be sensitive and personal. It was anticipated that students would be less likely to reveal some aspects of their world view while in the public domain of the classroom.

The interview strategy employed is generally non-directive, although this term tends to give the impression that the researcher has no specific goals in mind and is willing to allow the interviewee to reflect randomly upon the world. This is certainly not the case. When contemplating an interview, the researcher always had in mind the aims of the research programme, and broad areas which he wished to investigate. These topics were introduced into the conversation in the hope that the interviewee would respond to

them. However, there is the opposite danger in which the interviewer structures the interview so precisely, that he tends to predetermine the ways in which information and events will be classified. J Platt comments upon this difficulty:

On the whole, my interviews were exceedingly unstructured and thus were not very open to objections along these lines. But this is by no means an unequivocal advantage; if one loses control of the direction of conversation it may cease to be useful or relevant for the research, and there were indeed occasions when there were lengthy conversations of low value for the project which I could see no way to redirect without redefining my role.<sup>27</sup>

Interviews with the Hindu students were arranged at various venues around the college such as the library, empty classrooms or a staffroom. It was always the policy of the researcher to explain clearly the purpose of the interview. The preamble normally consisted of relating that he was working towards a degree and wanted to write a long essay about Indian religion and the beliefs of students. The respondents appeared to relate to this perfectly honest approach. The researcher also pointed out that although some of their views might be used in the 'essay' their real names would not be revealed nor was the name of the college to be mentioned. It is considered very important to take into account these ethical issues in the research and indeed, in subsequent chapters, although Hindu names are used throughout for the respondents, they are not their real names. All other features of personality, appearance and dress are accurately recorded, although care is taken to balance the value of such detail with considerations of anonymity. To this end, on occasion, less than the fullest possible description is provided.

The ethical issues of this nature are more prominent when researching a contemporary community and particularly when the product of the research might eventually be found in libraries and hence in the public domain. H S Becker describes some aspects of these ethical issues:



First, the social scientist has multiple loyalties: to those who have allowed or sponsored the study, to the source from which research funds were obtained, to the publisher of the research report, to other social scientists, to the society itself, and to the community or group studied, and its individual members. These loyalties and obligations often conflict.<sup>28</sup>

In the case of this particular study the conflicting obligations are primarily to ensure objectivity, honesty and academic rigour in the writing up of the research, while at the same time striving not to compromise respondents or the institution. In fact, the adherence to anonymity throughout the thesis helps to fulfil the latter obligation, and also liberates the researcher to analyse events objectively.

Consequently, the college lecturers and students are all given fictitious names in the account. In fact the college principal is willing for the real name of the college to be used, but it is considered that the extra layer of anonymity provided by a fictional name, constitutes added protection for respondents and encourages them to talk more freely.

Interviews were taped and later transcribed. Generally, students did not seem disconcerted by the recording and aspects of this process are discussed fully in the reflexive account.

Interviewees tend to respond very differently in the informal situation. Some show great interest in the idea of talking to a teacher about their culture and religion, and provide a great deal of information. Other respondents are less demonstrative and communicative and provide less data. W F Whyte describes this aspect of interviewing:

Every experienced fieldworker recognises that informants are not of equal value to the research. There are some individuals who, no matter how skilled the interviewer, do not notice what is going on around them or perhaps have difficulty in expressing

themselves. The best informants are those who are in a position to have observed significant events and who are quite perceptive and reflective about them.<sup>29</sup>

There were several such key informants who provided exceptionally valuable insights during the period of preliminary research and in fact suggested entirely unforeseen avenues of investigation. One example is a student who described how he fasted on one day each week on the advice of a Hindu priest, in order that he might improve his ability to study and to perform better at college. This example was of significance as it provided a direct connection between religious practice and ideas of educational attainment. The student in question was sufficiently perceptive to understand the issues which were of value to the research programme and to select these from his own experience.

Some researchers have taken the idea of key informants further by actually employing some students to gather information about others. A Pollard used a small group of pupils in the middle school in which he taught, to interview and gather information about other pupils:

The children advised me and collaborated with me. They interviewed each other and other children in their year group. They commented on my analysis as it unfolded. I do not believe that I would have been able to gather the data I did without this support, for, in essence, I experienced a type of collaborative sponsorship of myself as the researcher by the children who were being researched.<sup>30</sup>

Although Hindu students at Churchtown Tertiary College are not involved in the research programme in quite this way, some interviewees are able to provide detailed information about their peers. Ethical issues begin to emerge here. It is important to distinguish between accepting valid and interesting data, and becoming involved in gossip with one student about another.

One advantage of being involved with the administration of the CPVE programme is that there is access to a wide range of student records and documentation. These would not normally be available to an external researcher. This provides an additional research tool and one which enables a considerable amount of life history material to be accumulated. This is data which many students are eager to supplement for they are often interested in describing their own background and origins. N K Denzin is an advocate of the importance of such historical data:

Good sociology is both historical and comparative. Historically-rooted sociology establishes the chronological and temporal dimensions of human interaction. Comparative sociology serves to isolate the unique elements of social situations as these elements blend to form a general pattern of sociological explanation.<sup>31</sup>

The use of historical data also sheds light on the contemporary situation and as such constitutes a form of triangulation - that is a combination of methodologies in the study of the same subject. In a research project such as this, involved with personal and introspective issues, it is particularly important to collect data using different methods, in different contexts, at different times and from as many different social members as possible who may be participating in a particular event. The reason for this is stated by N K Denzin:

It is important, however, not to overlook the human-personalistic element in the scientific process. I have suggested that this element intrudes into every step of the scientific process; from the selection of research methods to research problems flowing from a favoured theory, personal values and preferences shape decisions. Despite the existence of public rules governing the enterprise called science, the values, definitions and ideologies of each scientist significantly determine the translation of rules of method into the scientific process.<sup>32</sup>

The use of multiple methods helps to reduce the subjectivity which is an inevitable facet of the interpretive paradigm. It is necessary for the researcher to treat the act of data



collection and of observation as a meeting of different perspectives and world views. Unless an attempt is made to circumvent the inherent dangers in this, then the process of theory construction from that data, will not have a sound basis.

On this research project various triangulation methods are employed in order to collect data from as many different perspectives as possible. Besides using informal interviews, the researcher arranged to teach a number of tutorial and other classes with CPVE students and was able to introduce teaching materials which required students to reflect upon various ethical and social problems. The purpose of this method was to observe the students at first hand analysing issues, discussing them with their peers, and hopefully revealing aspects of their social sense-making processes. Data was also collected during parents' evenings at college, in discussions at the Hindu temples, and at many locations around college, such as the library, refectory, classrooms and staffrooms. Data obtained in different ways is then cross-referenced to provide the depth of perspective needed to generate valid theory.

An important means of triangulating data is to utilise the opinions, oral evidence, and teaching experience of the many educationalists who come into contact with the Hindu students. Besides teachers, there are college administrative staff, careers officers, college counsellors, special educational needs tutors, and college careers advisers. The utilisation of some of this data however, poses certain ethical and practical problems for a teacher/researcher. Most of the data collected from such informants is employed in the subsequent theory generation process and much is quoted. However, the researcher is sometimes privy to informal comments made in, say, the staffroom, which while very interesting as data, may well be embarrassing to the utterer if they reached the public domain in written form. The employment as research data, of comments made by individuals who do not realise their views are being noted, involves serious ethical dilemmas. These are discussed in detail in the reflexive chapter.

One final issue in the collection of data is that of arranging informal interviews with the female students. Initially, the researcher had considerable doubts about the possibility of collecting data from the Hindu girls. It is possible that a Hindu girl would feel uncomfortable in discussion with a male member of staff. A female student might well agree to an informal interview, but would be so reticent that any data would be of limited value. The cultural norms which mitigate against contact with males in any kind of personal context, are still relatively closely observed, and the researcher is also aware that parents might be disconcerted if they heard of the interviews.

This is not to say that female students, whether of Asian cultural background or otherwise, are never interviewed by male staff. It happens, for example, during application procedures at the start of the academic year, or if a student requests to see a college counsellor. However, it was decided that there was the possibility of problematic situations arising, and that it would be desirable to limit interviews to male students.

The remaining question was one of devising suitable data-collection contexts which would be seen as culturally-acceptable to the female students. The classroom was the location where informal conversation is clearly legitimated, and therefore the researcher devised contexts where relevant issues could be raised. The researcher arranged to teach classes where social issues were often discussed and such contrived classroom discussions gave girls the opportunity to discuss issues in a non-threatening situation. It is also possible to engage female students in casual conversation at the beginning and end of lessons, when other students are present.

Many diverse methods are available within the interpretive paradigm for collecting data, but in the final analysis, such methods must be appropriate to the research context, and must yield data upon which sociological theory can be soundly constructed.

## The Generation of Sociological Theory

The ultimate purpose of this research study is the generation and testing of sociological theory with relation to Hindu students in a further education college.

Traditionally, interpretive sociologists have been rather less concerned with producing theory than sociologists working within other perspectives, and to some extent the reason for this may be found in the theoretical ideas enunciated earlier. Within this paradigm the social world is not viewed as having any clear ontological status. It is seen as being composed largely of the subjective constructions of individuals. Interpretive research has often sought to describe such constructions and to regard this as an end in itself.

Description is a valuable activity, and much precise description often includes tentative suggestions of relationships between concepts, categories or variables. However, description of a setting often presupposes theoretical concepts, since all description is selective to some extent, and if selection is not to be meaninglessly random, then it must be based upon some sort of theoretical consideration. This justification for the activity of generating social theory is clearly outlined by M Hammersley et al:

In sociology though ... for the most part we rely on theories which seem plausible, given the facts available to us, but which have been subjected to minimal, if any, checks. The result is that the 'pictures' we produce are of limited validity. To conflate the application of theories in the production of descriptions and explanations with the testing of theories discourages theory-testing, and thereby forces us to continue to rely on highly questionable theoretical ideas in explaining social events.<sup>33</sup>

Before examining the actual process of theorising, it is important to reflect upon the vital issue of sampling, for as M Hammersley writes in a different paper:



This is one of the weakest aspects of more recent ethnographic research. This weakness, is, in part, one aspect of the over-reaction to positivism, within which representative sampling has sometimes been treated as the methodologists' stone.<sup>34</sup>

In this research programme the orientation towards sampling is that provided by B G Glaser and A L Strauss and utilises their concept of 'theoretical sampling'.<sup>35</sup> They define this as:

... the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges.<sup>36</sup>

The first stage of theoretical sampling is simply to identify a general sociological subject or a potentially problematic area for further investigation. As this stage there will not be the certainty that the subject or group under investigation will merit a full-scale research programme. The corresponding stage in this research programme was to identify Hindu students in a college as a potentially interesting group of respondents.

Next, the researcher will naturally commence preliminary investigations and from these will emerge general features and structures of the research environment. In this research programme it is clear that the students defined themselves as Hindus; that they had academic or career ambitions; that they interacted with teachers; and that they studied, wrote assignments and visited libraries. While not remarkable features in themselves, enquiry into these general characteristics provides more precise theoretical orientations or 'categories' which can initiate further research. For example, the research might evolve the category of 'religious commitment' as an interesting dimension along which to examine the group of students and hence generate sociological theory. Once certain features of say religious commitment have been identified, sampling proceeds purely from the point of view of checking previous data or obtaining new data in relation to this category. As Glaser and Strauss write:

The basic criterion governing the selection of comparison groups for discovering theory is their theoretical relevance for furthering the development of emerging categories. The researcher chooses any groups that will help generate, to the fullest extent, as many properties of the categories as possible, and that will help relate categories to each other and to their properties.<sup>37</sup>

In this particular research programme it would be reasonable for the researcher to decide to investigate Hindu teachers or Hindu parents in order to assemble further data on the category of 'religious commitment'. Alternatively, one might identify sub-groups of the initial research population - one group clearly committed to religious culture and another which identifies with western secular society. Comparison might be expected to reveal data of theoretical significance. Within this perspective, the criteria for sampling are those of 'theoretical purpose and relevance - not of structural circumstance'.<sup>38</sup> That is, sampling proceeds according to criteria of practical usefulness in providing data for the generation of sociological theory.

As the sampling of different groups and sub-groups takes place, comparisons are inevitably made between similarities and differences in terms of emerging categories. These comparisons yield, upon analysis, a series of generalised relations between categories.

Such hypotheses need be based only upon suggested relationships and the researcher need not await the extensive accumulation of evidence or feel that an immediate burden of proof rests upon him.

Initially, hypotheses may seem isolated and unconnected, but as evidence accumulates, the researcher looks for inter-relationships which can form an integrated theoretical framework. This is the emerging theory. It is important to regard this theory as an entity in a state of dynamic evolution. As Glaser and Strauss state:

When generation of theory is the aim, however, one is constantly alert to emergent perspectives that will change and help develop his theory. These perspectives can easily occur even on the final day of study or when the manuscript is reviewed in page proof: so the published word is not the final one, but only a pause in the never-ending process of generating theory.<sup>39</sup>

This perspective sees theory essentially as a process rather than a product. The intention is not to present theory in a once and for all propositional form which must remain so until contrary evidence is provided. Rather, the perspective is to see theory as an entity which is being continually refined and developed. For convenience, it may be stated in propositional form, but these statements are to be regarded as merely fixed moments in a period of evolution. Glaser and Strauss contrast the 'propositional' form of theory with the 'discussional' form:

The discussional form of formulating theory gives a feeling of 'ever-developing' to the theory, allows it to become quite rich, complex and dense, and makes its fit and relevance easy to comprehend. On the other hand, to state a theory in propositional form, except perhaps for a few scattered core propositions, would make it less complex, dense and rich, and more laborious to read. It would also tend by implication to 'freeze' the theory instead of giving the feeling of a need for continued development.<sup>40</sup>

Therefore the empirical data of the research programme is used to formulate general, provisional statements which purport to represent, explain and predict certain features of social reality. As outlined above, such 'theories' are proposed, not as a final product, but as an evolving explanation, yet the reader is entitled to some degree of assessment and verification of the theory. This is provided by a process of deductive testing.

The procedure for the generation of theory which has been outlined so far is most appropriately described as an inductive method. The process of induction involves an examination of singular statements such as experimental or observational data, and



utilising these to derive universal statements. However, as K R Popper has identified, there is a fundamental logical problem with inductive methods:

Now it is far from obvious from a logical point of view, that we are justified in inferring universal statements from singular ones, no matter how numerous; for any conclusion drawn in this way may always turn out to be false: no matter how many instances of white swans we may have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that all swans are white.<sup>41</sup>

Thus if the researcher were to formulate a proposition such that the mother tongue of Hindu students was the most important cultural influence in their lives, Popper would argue that in no matter how many singular cases this was allegedly demonstrated, such evidence could never constitute sufficient support for universal applicability.

According to Popper this problem is resolved by employing the deductive method of testing. In this method, one does not propose a hypothesis and then proceed to seek particular cases which support it. Rather one concentrates on suggesting logical consequences, or predictions, from the hypothesis. One then seeks evidence which could falsify such predictions. If the researcher is successful then this new evidence falsifies the original hypothesis and the latter must be rephrased to accommodate the new evidence. In this manner, a cyclical process operates which continually seeks to refine and adapt hypotheses by seeking their falsification.

In this process is found the relevance of the method of theoretical sampling, for this sampling procedure sets out to gather data, not according to a pre-arranged strategy, but wherever there is promise of gathering relevant data to falsify hypotheses.

In the case of Asian mother-tongue languages cited above, one might hypothesise that if language were the most important ethnic cultural resource of a Hindu student, then one would not expect to find a student who was a devout Hindu but who either spoke no

Asian language or who disregarded his mother-tongue and allowed its use to lapse. If this is a logical prediction then according to the theory one would not find such a student. If such a student were found, then it would falsify the theory as stated and the latter would need adapting to take account of the new evidence.

However, if after a rigorous search, no such student were found, then one could accord the theory initial and provisional acceptance, and only this. One can only give temporary acceptance to the theory in this way, since negative evidence may be available in the future.

The last issue to be addressed in this section is the extent to which theory generated from this particular research sample of students can be generalised to other situations. This particular sample is relatively small and yet as data is collected during a period spanning three academic years, it has been possible to obtain data from some students who remained at college for more than one year.

It would have been possible to increase the sample size by collecting data from Hindu students studying for qualifications other than CPVE. However, this would have made the research more difficult to replicate. The CPVE sample represents a fairly-easily recognised academic profile, and another researcher could identify a similar group in another college. In addition, there did not seem to be any shortage of data from this particular sample.

It is clear that the Hindu students following this particular CPVE programme may not be representative of Hindu students in Churchtown Tertiary College as a whole, nor indeed of Hindu students in FE in general. This type of problem will always exist in the case of small-scale qualitative studies, and the researcher takes the view that the important issue is not so much the degree to which the sample is representative of a larger universe, but the way in which theory is generated from the data of that sample.

The fundamental requirement is that the sociological theory which is generated must be expressed in such a way that other researchers can examine and analyse the work. Now K R Popper pointed out an important matter of logic here:

Yet inter-subjective testability always implies that, from the statements which are to be tested, other testable statements can be deduced. Thus if the basic statements in their turn are to be inter-subjectively testable, there can be no ultimate statements in science: there can be no statements in science which cannot be tested, and therefore none which cannot in principle be refuted, by falsifying some of the conclusions which can be deduced from them<sup>42</sup>

In other words, it is important that the theory generated must be in such a form that other researchers can deduce further statements of a higher level of universality. These statements can in turn be intersubjectively tested.

The purpose of this research is to make general statements about this particular sample of Hindu students - statements which are scientific in the sense that they are inter-subjectively testable. It is unlikely that other researchers would be able to replicate this research with these particular students, but it ought to be possible to identify a similar sample in a similar college. If the results of this project are stated scientifically, then there should exist the possibility of their falsification.

The viewpoint of the researcher is that although the sample is relatively small it remains possible to generate sociological theory which is scientific in the sense to which Popper refers, and which can extend existing theory or form a basis for future research. This seems a reasonable and achievable ambition.



## CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In many ways this research study is inter-disciplinary, bringing together various methodological and 'subject' areas. It is an ethnographic study within which the primary approach is that of the interpretive paradigm. Since the context of research is the Further Education sector, it could reasonably be described as falling within the Sociology of Education. There is also, however, the dimension of culture and ethnicity. The subjects of the study are Hindus and therefore there is a distinct aspect of the thesis which can be described as involving comparative cultural studies or comparative religion. One would certainly wish to describe the study as coming broadly within the area of multi-cultural education. Parts of the study discuss discrete topics such as tertiary colleges, anti-racist education and racial discrimination. The following review of previous literature and research attempts to reflect the different topics and disciplines which have been drawn together in this thesis. In general, references to ethnographic studies in education have been included in the reflexive account at the end of the thesis, as it is here that different research approaches are discussed.

Some writers place emphasis on what they perceive as a lack of research in the multi-ethnic dimension of the Further Education sector. As F Reeves writes:

There is little empirical data on the position of racial minorities in further education. Systematic work remains to be done, but even cursory observation of a further education college in a multi-cultural area, indicates that beliefs in the 'comprehensive' nature of further education provision are probably unfounded. Racial minorities are clearly distributed in differing proportions between departments and courses of various status.<sup>1</sup>

This comment on the general lack of research in the area is coupled with a pessimistic note on the extent to which ethnic minorities have equal educational opportunities within Further Education colleges. The view about the lack of research is echoed by M Taylor:

While the further education sector is clearly of importance to ethnic minority youngsters, there has been little study of their experience of it from the point of view of the colleges and their presence in them.<sup>2</sup>

One of the prime motivations in initiating this study was indeed to provide more data on "their experience of it".

Information about ethnic minority students in Further Education is often included in more general surveys of this sector of education. A recent HMI report noted:

Some ethnic minority students were pursuing courses which were not their first choices. In some cases, students who applied for a vocational course were tested for their competence in the use of the English language as part of the selection process. Many students who failed the test were then counselled to join a foundation or preliminary course.<sup>3</sup>

The Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education is typical of this category of general foundation course in Further Education. It is also worth noting here a widespread phenomenon in the literature of multi-culturalism, that of referring to Afro-Caribbean and Asian students collectively as ethnic minorities. In some ways, a collective term such as this is understandable and justifiable because such students may share certain common experiences, for example, that of racial discrimination. However, there are clearly very considerable cultural differences between Afro-Caribbean and Asian students, and also between different Asian religious groups themselves. It is part of the argument of this thesis that there is a need for more research which does not treat ethnic minority students as if they were a homogeneous entity. There would seem to be a strong case for research studies which focus specifically on Muslim students or Sikh students, for example recognising that their particular cultural inheritance is an important factor in determining their response to the educational system.

Some studies set out to differentiate clearly between ethnic groups, but do not carry out the process to any significant detail. M Craft and A Craft conducted a detailed study of secondary school pupils in one London borough, and the extent of their progression to further and higher education.<sup>4</sup> The particular borough was selected because of the high percentage of ethnic minority pupils. In the questionnaires given to pupils, information was sought on ethnic origin by using a coding system which did in fact distinguish between Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils. However, no attempt was made to distinguish Indian Hindus from Indian Muslims, and it seems desirable that this distinction should have been made. Nevertheless, the study indicates important aspects of the attitude of 'Asian' pupils to education:

Social class operated predictably, middle-class fifth formers being less likely to leave school in all groups. But this still left Asian pupils from working-class families well-ahead of their peers, with about 80 per cent deciding to go into the sixth form.<sup>5</sup>

Some writers have focused particularly on the need to provide a detailed analysis beyond the normal categories of "ethnic minority" or "black". As B Parekh has written:

Both the Rampton and Swann reports had furnished valuable information on the comparative educational performance of Asian, Afro-Caribbean and white children in six local education authorities. Neither, however, had provided a detailed breakdown of the various Asian communities, shown how poor white children performed in the inner cities, compared the Afro-Caribbean performance with that of the African children, or related the examination results to the pupils' ability in verbal reasoning at the various stages.<sup>6</sup>

The article from which this extract is taken reviews the ethnically-based statistics of 'O' level and CSE examination results for 1985 and 1986, published by the Inner London Education Authority. The statistics do not provide any analysis based on religious background, and thus do not separate Sikhs, Hindus and Indian Muslims.



In a psychological study of Gujarāṭi children, H Vyas expresses this issue clearly:

It is necessary to divide the children from any nationality further, as language and religion appear to be major dimensions which are subsumed under the nationality groupings.<sup>7</sup>

Some studies have achieved this by collecting ethnographic data and interpolating this with the general account. The Community Relations Commission, in a survey of Further Education colleges located in multi-racial areas, provides biographical accounts and case studies of Asian students. One can infer from the names of the students, the particular religious group to which they belong. There are case studies of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu teenagers. The only assumption here is that if the names are fictional (and this is not discussed in the text) that a fictional Muslim name has been used for an actual Muslim student.

This survey constitutes a comprehensive examination of a number of Further Education colleges and the provision which they make for ethnic minority students. Some of the general comments made about ethnic minority students echo the situation on the CPVE programme at Churchtown College:

... such students are more often to be found on full-time courses than on day-release courses, and more often on lower-level full-time courses than on advanced ones.<sup>8</sup>

There is a not inconsiderable literature on the multi-cultural dimension of Further Education colleges. Much of this literature treats ethnic minorities as a homogeneous group and in general proposes sets of principles to guide colleges in responding to a multi-ethnic situation. For example, T Lupton and C Cleaver write:

Multi-ethnic education is based also on the principle of cultural diversity: the operation of this principle requires that all young people are equipped by their education to take their rightful place in society with dignity and respect irrespective of ethnic, religious or racial origins.<sup>9</sup>

Another example, on this occasion from a Commission for Racial Equality report is:

The curriculum is an important source of the knowledge, attitudes and values which young people take with them into adult life. The extent to which it reflects the realities of contemporary cultural diversity and pluralism, and presents these as positive aspects of British life, will have consequences for future race relations.<sup>10</sup>

Such general statements are helpful for Further Education managers and lecturers in that they re-state principles or beliefs which have fairly widespread acceptance, and by that re-affirmation presumably guide future developments. The major problem with these general statements however is that in the case of the latter quotation for example, lecturers will be unable to represent "contemporary cultural diversity" unless they have an awareness of the different patterns of ethnicity among their students. The purpose of the present research is to extend this knowledge in respect of Hindu students.

Some writers focus on organisational processes in Further Education colleges, suggesting how these structures can help the response to a multi-ethnic clientele. An FEU report suggests:

The designation of a permanent sub-committee of the Academic Board to review multi-ethnic policy, to include as appropriate 'cooption of those with specialist knowledge and experience not on the college staff'.<sup>11</sup>

Many colleges have established or advocate the formation of a Multicultural Education Unit:

The unit should have an overall responsibility for multicultural education and race relations in the college but this responsibility cannot and should not be unilateral. There must be an overall consensus about the policies and the goals to be achieved and commitment to their achievement.<sup>12</sup>

A criticism which can be levelled at the previous two quotations is that there is frequently an assumption that organisational and administrative structures can resolve many of the issues of a multicultural college. There is normally insufficient awareness of the need for a detailed knowledge of the different cultures existing in the college, and the ways in which these cultures interrelate.

Some writers have focused upon issues concerned specifically with pre-vocational education:

Despite declared aims and conscious effort to eliminate racial and sexual discrimination in recruitment, selection and vocational choice in the CPVE and YTS programmes, these still persist.<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting to compare this rather broad statement with some of the comments made about discrimination by the Hindu student sample in the study.

Martin Broome describes a range of pre-employment courses at Dewsbury College, West Yorkshire, which although pre-dating CPVE, are clearly based upon the same premises:

The Foundation Course caters for those young people who need a 'bridge' between school and employment, who require further general education before choosing a career, or who are, at the time of entry, uncommitted to any vocational direction.<sup>14</sup>



Dewsbury College serves a multicultural community with a large Asian population. There are very few Hindus in Dewsbury however, and most Asians are Indian or Pakistani Muslims.

W Ball analysed the multi-cultural education policy of an un-named local education authority:

The demands of the local Asian communities for their cultures and religions to be recognised by schools go beyond their tokenistic celebration in the occasional assembly or Religious Education lesson. They want their different cultural requirements in the areas of dress, diet, religious observance and holiday arrangements to be institutionalised.<sup>15</sup>

This is an example of a study where it would be valuable and indeed essential to know the cultural background of the Asian community. It seems reasonable that people of different religious backgrounds would react differently in terms of a desire to see cultural background "institutionalised" in the education system. It would seem likely that there would be major differences in this respect between say Hindu and Muslim communities.

Of the recent literature on multicultural education, some of the most comprehensive data is contained in the Swann Report: Education for All.<sup>16</sup> However, this detailed work focuses almost exclusively on the schools sector. The first stated aim in the report's terms of reference is:

... to review in relation to schools the educational needs and attainments of children from ethnic minority groups taking account, as necessary, of factors outside the formal education system relevant to school performance, including influences in early childhood and prospects for school leavers;<sup>17</sup>

The Further Education Unit, in its response to the Swann Report, noted that while it had provided evidence to the Committee "which highlighted the need for the Committee to give consideration to issues of transition and access to FE and HE as well as to curriculum issues for the 16-19 group",<sup>18</sup> this material had not been incorporated in the Report or addressed significantly.

This is perhaps not too surprising given the brief of the Committee, yet one feels that an acknowledgement of the importance of multicultural issues within the sixteen to nineteen age group would have been very desirable, since many ethnic minority students inevitably progress to Further Education.

The FEU response also argues strongly for more research, particularly in the area of pre-vocational education:

Suggested research on curriculum review and development should also obviously include the FE system. It is also necessary that research on new curricular initiatives should include YTS and CPVE, as well as TVEI.<sup>19</sup>

From this point of view the present thesis is timely.

The absence of a perspective upon Further Education is also noted by D Driver:

The lack of reference to further education's (FE) part in promoting this new climate is disturbing; yet the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) did submit evidence.<sup>20</sup>

She also mentions one significance of the CPVE:

The latest initiative, the Certificate of Prevocational Education, emphasises the importance of a multicultural, anti-racist perspective in its core.<sup>21</sup>

An interesting document in the Swann Report is the paper prepared by the DES Statistics Branch which analyses the data from the DES School Leavers Survey of 1981/82.<sup>22</sup> This survey collected data on a sample of children from specific ethnic groups, who left school during a given academic year. Data was collected on age, gender, academic qualifications and intended destination. For the purposes of this thesis the data is again flawed because of the use of the category 'Asian'. However, in a commentary on the Survey, it is noted in the Swann Report that:

In the absence of nationally-agreed categories, the classifications used by the schools varied widely, from a straightforward division between 'ethnic minority' and 'White', or 'Asian' and 'West Indian', to breakdowns between Asian subgroups on a country of origin basis (Pakistan, East Africa, India), a religious basis (Muslim, Sikh, Hindu), or on the basis of home language (Panjabi, Gujarati). This lack of a common approach to classification meant that we were unable to base any firm conclusions on the data we received as to the relative performance of the Asian sub-categories.<sup>23</sup>

While noting the clear difficulties in contrasting data from 'Asian' school-leavers with the sample from this study, the summary of results from the DES paper is at least interesting in the context of this thesis:

Asian children stay on longer at school than other children, and achieve slightly below the national average in overall levels of academic achievement. They exhibit a greater propensity to leave school to follow some form of full-time further education and are only slightly less-likely to go to university or sit a degree course.<sup>24</sup>

The Swann Report argues for much more research on the position of ethnic minorities in education. In a paper outlining a suggested research policy, J Carnford suggests five



priorities for funding, one of which is 'The transition from school to work'.<sup>25</sup> In a further analysis of this area of research he advocates work on:

... the experience of minority pupils on youth training schemes and in further education. A comparatively high proportion of minority pupils attend further education colleges, and this, along with youth training schemes, may be the most important substitute for the education that some of them are not getting at school.<sup>26</sup>

Again this seems to be a plea for the kind of work carried out in this thesis.

Some studies of Asian young people have employed ethnographic methods. G Verma and B Ashworth<sup>27</sup> used a combination of psychometric tests and tape-recorded interviews with a sample of two hundred fifteen year olds in their final year at secondary school. The pupils are described as 'South Asians' and again their specific cultural background is unstated. There appear to have been both Hindus and Muslims in the sample.

This study focuses on the issue of the aspirations of South Asian young people, and the observation by some in education that they exhibit unrealistic aspirations in terms of both academic and vocational goals. The study concludes, however, that over-aspiration may well be a function related more to social class than to ethnicity.

Thus the 'over-aspiration' of South Asian youngsters which has frequently been explained in the literature in terms of cultural factors may simply be a reaction to the group experience of their parents who have been involved primarily in unpleasant and difficult work - the kind which indigenous workers were reluctant to tackle.<sup>28</sup>

The issue of over-aspiration or extended aspiration appears in some of the discussions with students, explored later in this thesis.

In another account of one aspect of this large-scale project, G Verma, K Mallick, and B Ashworth focus on the transition from school to work or Further Education, of South Asian young people. They review again the high aspirations of South Asians, and in the following extract discuss the case of 'a young Indian':-

The strong link between educational and occupational aspirations held by the majority of our South Asian sample was expressed for example by a young Indian who wished to become a doctor:

"You don't have to work but I need to work because I want to go out and get a higher social position where I can in fact create a good career for myself or good prospects for the future."

This particular boy was interviewed the second time after taking his 'A' level examinations; he had failed to obtain the required grades to take up a place at medical school. Instead of entering an alternative profession (he seemed well-equipped to enter University for most other courses) he stayed on at school to retake the examination.<sup>29</sup>

C Wright gathered ethnographic data on ethnically-mixed classes of fifth formers in two schools. Interactions between teacher and students were tape-recorded and field notes maintained. Most of the ethnic minority students were Afro-Caribbean but a few were 'Asians'. A typical exchange is:

Kulwinder (Asian girl)	Hey Vincent, when will we be having our Maths exam?
	[Teacher looks up from marking]
Teacher	(In a raised voice.) Will you four girls stop talking and get on with your work.
Barbara (Afro-Caribbean)	We are working; we're just talking about the question.
Jean (Afro-Caribbean)	It's not only us talking. What about her (pointing to Kulwinder) shouting, why do you always pick on us. <sup>30</sup>

Although this study concentrates on data gathered about Afro-Caribbean students there is incidental information about Asians. In the above extract, Kulwinder is a Panjabi name, and the girl could be either Sikh or Hindu.

C A Baker and K C Thomas carried out an ethnographic study of a single Further Education college, focusing on the ethnic minority students who constituted about ten per cent of the total student population. The research sample consisted of twelve students, nine Afro-Caribbean and three Asian, selected at random from the approximately one hundred full-time ethnic minority students in the college. The students were interviewed and their responses recorded on tape.

The students were asked for such things as:

... information on educational background and examinations already taken, reasons for continuing full-time education post-16, reasons for choosing to study in a FE college, details of the course being taken, previous careers guidance and the degree of parental support, as well as career aspirations and immediate and long-term objectives.<sup>31</sup>

It is unfortunate that once again, not only are the Asian students not distinguished in terms of cultural background or religion, but in many parts of the research report the Asian students are not distinguished from the Afro-Caribbean. This is in spite of the argument that:

The general opinion is that there are considerable differences not only between the performance and achievement of black and white pupils, but also divergences between the main minority groups, Asian and West Indian.<sup>32</sup>



Nevertheless, many of the conclusions relate to previous research mentioned and to this study of Hindu students:

Ethnic minority students show a strong desire to acquire qualifications and in many cases are so desperate to study that they often enrol for inappropriate and unsuitable courses, in fact, any prepared to accept them.<sup>33</sup>

P M E Figueroa and L T Swart conducted a study, which was primarily ethnographic, into the ethnic minority pupils in the fourth year of a comprehensive school. Lessons were observed and tape recorded and some pupils provided biographical information. The researchers had access to pupil records and previous reports as well as internal exam results.

The research report describes the racism which existed in this particular school, both among the pupils and the staff. The writers also emphasise the effects which some cultural differences can have:

The Asian home-school liaison officer pointed to cultural differences as a source of poor communication and conflict between teachers and Asian pupils. She referred to an incident where a teacher became furious with an Asian girl for replying 'yeah' instead of 'yes, miss', even though the girl did not mean to be impolite. The Asian pupils, though accustomed to strictness, are not accustomed, she said, to 'that kind of formality'.<sup>34</sup>

Y P Gupta carried out a study of Asian school-leavers in two large comprehensive schools. There is the issue once again of the use of the term 'Asian', but this is addressed in the paper:

The word 'Asian' in this paper is used in its 'popular usage', ie. referring to the people originating from the countries of the Indian sub-continent.<sup>35</sup>

Matched groups of Asian and indigenous school-leavers were compared, and in general the Asian teenagers had higher educational and vocational aspirations when compared with their white counterparts.

Gupta seeks to explain this in part, by the very positive parental attitude towards education, which is noticeable amongst Asian parents. It is clear from the following extract that Gupta considered many of the pupils sampled to be Hindu, because he implicitly makes this assumption:

Taking the first factor of positive parental attitude towards education, it is well-known that respect for the educated and for education is inherent in the Indian culture. Brahmins, the educated class, are always elevated to the highest status in the social hierarchy. With such a cultural tradition of having respect for education, Asian youngsters aspired for longer schooling and higher education.<sup>36</sup>

G Driver and R Ballard,<sup>37</sup> and S Tomlinson<sup>38</sup> carried out extensive reviews of the research up to their respective dates of publication, on the educational performance of ethnic minority children. South Asian children tend not to be distinguished in terms of religion or culture, but Driver and Ballard note:

The South Asian population in Britain is of course extremely diverse, but some common features can be detected. Although some migrants, such as doctors, have come to Britain with considerable educational qualifications, the great majority of immigrants were from rural areas, and had little or no formal education ... Nonetheless, Ballard's recent ethnographic evidence suggests that, once having settled down in Britain, members of many South Asian families have begun to develop much higher educational and occupational aspirations for their children. Not only have they encouraged them to work hard at school, but they have generally been prepared to extend considerable support to their children's efforts to gain further qualifications in the tertiary sector.<sup>39</sup>

This is certainly the kind of situation which begins to emerge in this study.

G K Verma argues quite clearly and at length that the South Asian population of Britain is not a homogeneous group:

For instance, there are at least five distinct clusters of Asian communities (as mentioned above) in Britain who do not form a single cultural and social group. They differ in terms of language, values, customs and social class. There are over 18 major languages with totally separate scripts, about ten main religions, several castes and hundreds of sub-castes. Thus, among sub-populations of Asian communities there are certain dimensions of difference that are to be found between immigrant groups in general.<sup>40</sup>

One of the aims of this study is to investigate the commonly heard but unsubstantiated views that Asian students tend to aspire to unrealistic courses or jobs. Verma states that:

The results of our study indicate that some South Asian youngsters did admit to having had fantasy aspirations, but it also appears that these were similar to the fantasies admitted to by indigenous adolescents.<sup>41</sup>

Later in the same paper Verma adds to his comments on this issue,

The 'over-aspiration' of South Asian youngsters has often been described in the literature as culturally determined, but it may simply be a reaction to the group experience of South Asians in work situations which have been predominantly unpleasant.<sup>42</sup>

One of the most comprehensive studies of ethnic minority students in Further Education arose through a joint seminar organised by the National Union of Students and the



Further Education Unit.<sup>43</sup> Twenty students were selected from six different colleges in the East and West Midlands and in London. They were invited to attend discussion groups at the Commission for Racial Equality in London, and the discussions were recorded and later transcribed. Student comments were then analysed into various subject and topic categories relating to Further Education; and presented as such in the final publication. The participants were also asked to complete a questionnaire giving some basic personal details and background information about the college which they attended.

The organisers attempted to obtain a balance in the sample between Asian and Afro-Caribbean students, and between male and female. In addition, the college Student Unions, who initially recruited students, sought to obtain a student sample representing a wide variety of FE courses. They also attempted to exclude individuals who appeared to be motivated primarily by political issues.

The authors of the report noted the limitations of a small sample, and also the advantages of small-scale ethnographic research - comments which might well support the present study:

Although efforts were made to ensure that the range of participants invited was not unrepresentative, and information was collected to check that this was the case, there are obviously severe limitations imposed by the size of the sample necessary for a single discussion. The strength and validity of the technique rests principally on the recording of the authentic experiences of a small number of individuals rather than on any claim to be strictly representative.<sup>44</sup>

The main purpose of the seminar was to gather data on the general experiences of ethnic minority students in Further Education colleges. A central purpose of the organisers was that there should be a definite attempt to discuss the positive as well as the negative aspects of the FE experience for ethnic minorities.

The comments made by individuals were recorded, as far as possible protecting the identity of respondents, although students were identified as either Asian or Afro-Caribbean. The reason given for this in the report was that "it was anticipated that there could be significant differences in the experiences of the two racial groupings which would otherwise not be identifiable".<sup>45</sup>

Some of the students who had originally promised to attend the seminar, did not arrive on the day, leaving a final sample of sixteen students, comprising seven Afro-Caribbean males, and four Afro-Caribbean females; three Asian males and two Asian females. The student age-range was from sixteen to twenty-six, and the qualifications of the students ranged from none to 'A' levels.

The majority of the students were taking a combination of 'O' levels and 'A' levels. Five students were enrolled on vocational courses of one type or another, and of these two were Youth Training Scheme trainees based at a college Training Workshop.

The chairperson attempted to focus on the following general issues without appearing to be too prescriptive:

Motivation for entry to Further Education.

Information available about Further Education before entry.

Experience of Further Education - general  
- teaching  
- racism  
- student unions.

Impact of Further Education on individuals.

Suggested improvements.<sup>46</sup>

It is significant from the point of view of the issue of terminology of ethnic groups, that this was one of the first issues raised by students. The programme for the day gave the title as "Black students and FE seminar". One of the Asian participants commented upon this immediately:

I don't know how anyone else here, and Asian, feels about that. I'm not saying I don't feel bad to be classified as a black student, but I do think it is a bit unfair. I want to know why it was put as Black Students and the FE seminar. Is there any particular reason for that?<sup>47</sup>

The main reason for justifying this title given by the organisers was that the term 'black' was 'regarded as acceptable'<sup>48</sup> by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Further Education Unit. This was clearly a form of self-validating justification. However, as a result of this and other protestations, the organisers adapted the title of the final report, to include 'The Experience of Afro-Caribbean and Asian students in Further Education'.

While this approach appears to be an improvement, it is unclear in the text of the final report whether quotations derive from an Afro-Caribbean or Asian respondent. This is important within the context of the earlier statement by the organisers that there might well be cultural differences between responses from separate ethnic groups.

For some participants, one of the main functions of Further Education was to enable them to gain academic qualifications. As this was an issue which arose in this study of Hindu students it would have been very interesting to know whether a quotation such as the following came from an Afro-Caribbean or Asian student:

... being black people in this country we need to have more pieces of paper to wave in their faces than anybody else. You've got to have the relevant qualifications and everything. If you don't have more than the next person who is not black, are you going to get the job?<sup>49</sup>



In general this report acts as an interesting parallel study to the one at Churchtown, because it involves informal qualitative research methods and investigates many of the same issues, albeit over a much contracted period of time.

To take one final extract, it is interesting to note the animosity felt towards YTS. The organisers noted that:

Complaints were also made of misleading information being given about YTS schemes and pressure being placed on students to abandon college courses in favour of YTS.<sup>50</sup>

One respondent commented that:

I was told that I would be working with a computer most of the time. I found most of the time I had to stick down letters and that was it.<sup>51</sup>

Some ten years prior to this seminar the then Community Relations Commission published a more detailed account of the provision made by FE for ethnic minorities.<sup>52</sup> This study includes statistical as well as ethnographic data. Transcriptions of teacher-student interactions and case studies of individual FE students were documented. More importantly for the present study, individual students were named and it was thus possible to identify, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu students separately. It is unclear whether the names are real or fictional, but one assumes that if fictional, that they reflect the actual religious group. One case study of a Hindu student reflects the problems of a teenager newly-arrived in this country. He has limited English and on arrival is advised to go to the careers office:

Here he was told that because his English was poor, no job with training was available. Late in September he applied to the local technical college and was offered a place which had not been taken up on a Radio and TV Maintenance Course. After the second year of the course he failed the examinations and returned to the careers office.<sup>53</sup>

The study stressed the importance of linguistic competence in academic attainment, and pointed out a tendency in some FE staff to acknowledge the situation of language deprivation, but to contain rather than try to improve it.

'Language is a problem but we're coping - some of them do very well you know'. In other words, both staff and students are 'coping' - which means developing strategies for concealing and by-passing the symptoms of poor communication so that the disease is discovered too late for treatment and the high failure rate for minority group students becomes a fact of life.<sup>54</sup>

In a major study of multi-cultural education in this country S Tomlinson argues that the importance attached to education by ethnic minority parents is a function of their colonial and cultural backgrounds.<sup>55</sup> She reviews research studies which have sought to shed light on parental attitudes, but draws particular attention to the work of P A S Ghuman and R Gallop which advocated culturally-specific studies.<sup>56</sup>

J Matthew in a study of Asian girls and women at Bradford College, monitored academic attainment on GCE courses. This study offers parallels to the CPVE course described in this thesis:

However, the fact that the failure rate on the GCE courses is disturbingly high and that the same individuals fail repeatedly seems to suggest some difference in expectation between Asian and non-Asian students - and their parents.

British youngsters in general are encouraged or discouraged to take these examinations according to the level of their occupational ambitions and their potential 'ability' and, if they fail, they turn their attention to something else. In other words, they

stop competing because they know they will not win the prizes. Asians on the other hand, need not behave this way, either because their perception of the prizes is different, or because there is a confusion about the relationship between the ends, the conventional prizes, and the means, the conventional competition.<sup>57</sup>

The urgency with which some of the Hindu students in the sample pursued academic qualifications, reflects the situation in the above quotation. One suspects that the desire to obtain formal qualifications is not restricted to Asian girls.

The respect for education shown by Hindu families is clearly outlined by D Hiro in an early summary of Indian immigrants in England:

Those Indian immigrants who cannot speak English respect those who are well-educated and speak English fluently. And most Indians consider mental work to be 'better' than menial work. All Indian immigrants value education highly, and are keen to give their children the best possible education in Britain.<sup>58</sup>

There have been a considerable number of publications advocating a multicultural perspective on Further Education. These have tended to be descriptive of academic or administrative structures established in a particular college, or have been exhortatory in tone, advocating a particular type of response to the reality of a multicultural society. There is also a widespread attempt to address and counter the alleged racism which is said to exist in FE colleges.

A Murray argues:

Britain, in common with other European countries, has based its education system on the dominant national culture - the 'White Anglo-Saxon' culture in Britain - which has a 'given' status in the traditional curriculum. In addition, many of the assumptions of the colonial period have been carried over into the post-colonial period and pervade much of the curriculum.<sup>59</sup>



Two recent research studies have investigated attempts within institutions, to counter racism. The first, by P M Foster,<sup>60</sup> involved a case study of an inner-city comprehensive school which espoused a specifically anti-racist education policy. The research report indicated a successful attempt by school staff to create a positive multicultural environment, within which there was little restriction of life chances for ethnic minority individuals.

The second study, by J Pankhania,<sup>61</sup> focused on the implementation of anti-racist policies in FE colleges in the city of Manchester. It examines various ideologies of anti-racism such as assimilation, integration and multiculturalism from a Marxist perspective. Both studies stress the impact on institutional policies of external factors such as the surrounding community and local political viewpoints.

R Arora of Bradford and Ilkley Community College has described the college policy on multi-cultural education:

The College will take all necessary steps to eliminate racial discrimination, and to work towards the development of good relationships between all ethnic groups. It will ensure that all College policies, rules and procedures are devised and reviewed to ensure equality of opportunity and to prevent possible racial discrimination.<sup>62</sup>

A general issue for CPVE in colleges is the tendency for the programme to enrol large numbers of ethnic minority students. The specific causes for this are unclear and could form the basis of an interesting study. D Dunn of the University of Keele raises the issue in relation to the Youth Training Scheme and selection at sixteen:

And of critical importance is the internal selection process of schools: the extent to which black pupils may be disproportionately allocated to sets, streams or bands, which do not serve to provide for their realistic aspirations, or may be forced to take optional subjects at a lower level or leading to different specialisms from those they might have preferred.<sup>63</sup>

P Mackney has written on the alleged racism inherent in the Youth Training Scheme:

The indisputable fact is that black youths are getting a raw deal from the Youth Training Scheme even though, for many of them, it is their only hope of access to employment. The primary reasons for this are discrimination and neglect of other factors such as the geographical location of schemes which could enhance opportunity for black youth.<sup>64</sup>

This is of interest in the context of the comments made by some of the Hindu students about YTS. The general extent of the racial harassment in schools and colleges has been documented by the Commission for Racial Equality.<sup>65</sup> This survey documents widespread racism in our education system and suggests that 'effective learning could take place only when pupils had a feeling of self-confidence, well-being, and security, flourishing in conditions conducive to equality of opportunity, mutual respect and co-operation.'<sup>66</sup>

A study which included not only ethnographic detail but which also distinguished between Asian young people of different religions and cultural backgrounds, was carried out in 1975 by M Anwar for the Commission for Racial Equality.<sup>67</sup>

The general purpose of the study was to investigate inter-generational conflict within the Asian community in Britain, focusing particularly on the problems experienced by young people with a different perspective on life from that of their parents.

Of particular relevance to the present research is that when direct ethnographic or interview data is recorded, it generally states the cultural or religious background of the young person concerned. For example, following a discussion of the 'arranged marriage':

There is considerable confidence among young people that parents know best - "They know what is right", was mentioned by fifteen per cent of young people, and "it is part of the cultural tradition" by nine per cent.

... A Gujarati Hindu boy related it to customs: "this is due to our custom and arranged marriages work very well".<sup>68</sup>

An appendix provides detailed case-studies of the conflicts which can arise between Asian young people and their parents. In some cases this data provides a contrast with the rather easy-going relationships which emerge in some of the present research. For example, a twenty-one year old Gujarāti Hindu man is described as commenting on the arranged marriage system:

My mother and father have brought me up very strictly and from childhood they have been telling me that I should marry where they like. When I married my own choice, they opposed it strongly.<sup>69</sup>

An otherwise comprehensive report from NATFHE on Multi-cultural Education,<sup>70</sup> fails to provide the degree of detail on cultural background which is noted in the previous report. However, the report comments:

Thus there are important differences of past and maybe present experiences between West Indians from rural areas in the smaller islands and those from Kingston, Jamaica. In the same way, there are substantial differences between Asians from Bangladesh, those from Gujarat, and those from East Africa.<sup>71</sup>



Throughout the study, however, these differences are not noted in terms of terminology. The descriptors 'black' and 'ethnic minority' are used.

M Hammersley's ethnographic account of Downtown School - a boys Secondary Modern school provides data on teacher attitudes to various ethnic groups. The following example involves a teacher speaking to another teacher in the staffroom:

The Indians and Pakistanis, they're ambitious. These white boys are either too backward or they have a care-less attitude. The West Indians, they're the closest to savages in this country.<sup>72</sup>

Hammersley describes this as evidence of the "differential evaluation of different immigrant groups".<sup>73</sup> There is clearly evidence here to support the general assertion - evident also in this thesis - that Indian pupils and students are well motivated in an educational context. In the employment of the word 'savages' there is also the clear use of a racist term.

An extensive study of Asian students in Further Education colleges was conducted by V Marett in three colleges in the Leicester area.<sup>74</sup> Data was gathered from both students and their parents on general attitudes to the education system. The methodology consisted of a series of semi-structured interviews with students and parents, and a questionnaire which was given to a larger sample of students. The sample size for the questionnaire was 222 students, distributed within three different Further Education colleges.

A number of Indian students were quoted as making positive statements about the education system:

"Oh we believe in education alright. Every time the Government raises the school-leaving age, you'll find all the Indians staying on a year on top of it."

"Indians are mad about education. Every father thinks his son is going to be the most famous scientist in the world."

"My father, uncle, brother all say education is like having money in the bank. You can't do anything without it."<sup>75</sup>

Also mentioned by students is the idea of education as a status symbol:

"My father wants me to have a good future. But he also likes to say to customers 'I have a son at college'."<sup>76</sup>

There is thus no shortage of research on multiculturalism in education, particularly in the schools sector. In general too, the issues of a culturally-plural society have been addressed in the Further Education context. Particularly is this so, from the point of view of combating racism in its various guises. There is however, a dearth of research which recognises that the experiences of a particular ethnic group bear some relationship to their distinctive religion and culture. Some research addresses the issues confronting "black" people or "ethnic minorities", while other work is more specific, addressing "Asians" or "Afro-Caribbeans". The present work is predicated upon the assumption that while there must clearly be some commonalities in the experiences of all ethnic minorities - for example, in terms of the experience of "immigration" - in general, perception of the world is much more culturally - specific.

"Asian" seems to be a far too general term to use to describe people, and even within say, the Indian sub-continent, one can discern major ethnic groupings which differ so markedly in background as to make it almost self-evidently imperative that they be treated separately in any research study.

It is within this context, that this study sets out to redress the balance in two distinct ways. One is to focus on a particular ethnic group and the other is to study the respondents within the Further Education sector - an area of education which has been relatively ignored in comparison with the schools sector.



### CHAPTER 3 THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

The students in this study are in many ways like other FE students. They wear fashionable clothes and have their hair cut in unusual contemporary styles. They carry their books in enormous 'designer-label' holdalls and wear the latest type of trainer shoes. They congregate rowdily on corridors; shout to their friends; plan their futures; work at part-time jobs; complain about their parents; work hard sometimes and are lazy at others. They are typical adolescents, but they are unusual in that to a greater or lesser degree their perception of the world is affected by an upbringing within the oldest major religious system in the world.

Hinduism affects many aspects of their lives. In the case of some students it represents an entire cosmological, spiritual and social system within which they are embraced. With others it is a diffuse social and ethical system which provides at most one of several unifying features in their lives.

This cultural and religious world remains largely an undisclosed world. It exists almost totally hidden from the college staff, and white indigenous students. Some Muslim students may be aware of superficial features often because they live in the same neighbourhood and will either witness cultural events or to some extent be part of, the social life of Hindu families.

The purpose of this study is to reveal something of this hidden world. This chapter provides an introduction to some features of the students' lives. It examines their pre-college world - the schools attended either in India or England; students' aspirations on coming to college; perceptions and preconceived ideas about Churchtown Tertiary College; impressions of college life during the first term and some of the students' initial ideas about employment prospects. Let us peer into this hidden world.

Narain is 16 years of age. He started the course in September 1986. He was born in Churchtown of Gujarāti parents and spoke fluent colloquial English. He confronted the world with a very open and honest demeanour, yet had relatively few close friends amongst his classmates. He was, however, always seeking the opportunity to talk to members of staff and was an enthusiastic and hard-working student. Narain was always very willing to converse about his feelings and views about education. In the following conversation from March 1987<sup>1</sup> he discusses the high school which he attended:

- 1 Narain (N) I nearly went to Catholic College<sup>2</sup> which . . . we--,  
2 because they are a bit more serious there. Sometimes  
3 its a doss 'ere . . . . 'cos some kids don't attend  
4 lessons and nothing 'appens to them.
- 5 Researcher (R) You think they have a more serious attitude to work  
6 there . . . um . . . than we do? I don't mind if . . .  
7 you can say so if you want. (Researcher smiling). Be  
8 honest.
- 9 N No . . . they do. See I went to All Saints<sup>3</sup> and it was  
10 the same there. Everybody . . . they all work hard.
- 11 R That's a Catholic school.
- 12 N Catholic . . . yes.
- 13 R Well, I'm interested in that . . . because, well,  
14 did you choose to go to a Roman Catholic school,  
15 or was there + + +
- 16 N I did. Me elder brother went there . . . then I did.
- 17 R So actually . . . did you have a choice of high  
18 school?
- 19 N I did . . . yeh.
- 20 R And you chose a Catholic school?
- 21 N Yeh.
- 22 R But did it matter that you aren't a Catholic? When  
23 you went there.
- 24 N No, they don't mind. We do all the confession and  
25 Mass and everything, and Father Jones\* he don't  
26 mind. Very good, he was.
- 27 R Was Father Jones\* the headmaster?
- 28 N Like . . . the priest.
- 29 R So why did you choose All Saints\*?
- 30 N Just . . . it's kind of a more serious school.

31 R Did many Asian students go there?  
 32 N Some Hindus like me . . . some Muslims. Not many.  
 33 R How about Religious Education . . . did you just go  
 34 to the classes? You didn't have any special classes  
 35 or anything . . . on your own?  
 36 N Yes . . . we just joined in.  
 37 R Was Hinduism ever mentioned, or was it just all  
 38 Roman Catholic?  
 39 N All Catholic.  
 40 R Did that matter? Was it . . . er . . . was your  
 41 religion mentioned in school?  
 42 N Yeh, they did . . . see in Art we did this Christmas  
 43 project and I painted all the Gods and Goddesses . . .  
 44 and they didn't mind.  
 45 R So when you finished school didn't you want to  
 46 go to Catholic College? \*  
 47 N I did . . . in one way. I had some mates and they  
 48 all went on YTS . . . so that left me, and I  
 49 came 'ere.  
 50 R So you didn't have friends going to Catholic College? \*  
 51 N Not really . . . I knew some kids who was coming 'ere.

Several interesting themes emerge from this discussion which took place in a free period between lessons. The first is Narain's conception of education as being a serious endeavour. In this context, he should not be seen as an introspective, studious person - later interviews reveal his wide range of interests. When he says that 'they' at Catholic College\* are 'a bit more serious' (line 2) he is probably using 'they' to refer impersonally to the entire college establishment. He does not use the word 'serious' to imply a humourless, and oppressive atmosphere at the college, but rather that the entire educational enterprise is treated with due attention and rigour. Narain is scornful of fellow students who fail to attend classes (line 4) and of a system which appears to him, not to enforce attendance.

There is actually within the college, a complex administrative system whereby class absences are recorded. Subject teachers send absence forms to their own Head of



Department who forwards them to the Head of Department responsible for the course on which the student is enrolled. The offending student is then asked to explain the absence, during the tutorial class in the subsequent week.

When Narain says that 'nothing 'appens to them' (line 4) he is probably aware that there are sanctions against persistent absentees<sup>4</sup> but he is implying that he does not perceive these as being sufficiently rigorous. Moreover, he reserves the term 'doss' (line 3) for some aspects of college - a term with considerable pejorative connotations.

'Doss' is a widely-used word amongst the students. It can be applied to either a lesson, an activity or a text-book exercise which is regarded as excessively easy. A student often refers to an activity as a 'doss' when s(he) is pleased that only minimal effort needs to be expended. However, it is also used as a depreciatory comment upon an activity which the student feels should have been more difficult or more closely-controlled by the teacher. Narain uses the word in this sense, and is not the only student among the respondents to employ this word in referring to some aspects of college life.

Narain's obvious respect for formalism in the educational process is underlined by the choice of a Roman Catholic High School (line 9) and the fact that he would have chosen Catholic College\* in preference to the Tertiary College if only some of his friends had also been going there (line 50). The relative virtues of the two colleges as they exist in reality are less important for this study than the fact that Narain clearly believes Catholic College\* to treat the educational enterprise more seriously, and that he perceives this as being a desirable characteristic.

One also obtains in this discussion, a feeling of the religious tolerance displayed by Narain. Further discussions with Narain revealed that he was a regular attender at the Hindu temple and indeed took his religion very seriously. Narain appears to have been happy to fit in with patterns of worship at All Saints\*, yet more than this, is the significance of the phrase 'Father Jones he don't mind' (line 25). Narain does not seek to praise his own tolerance at complying with another tradition. Rather, he compliments by implication, the tolerance of the Roman Catholic priest for allowing him into their ceremony and tradition. There is here an apparent lack of any sense of regarding his own religion as of central importance. Later in the interview, Narain does not appear particularly concerned that Hinduism is not specifically mentioned in Religious Education (line 42). He exhibits a selfless pleasure in painting Hindu deities and again he uses the phrase '... and they didn't mind', (line 44). There also seems to be contained within this phrase an acceptance of the legitimate authority of the school in deciding what may and may not be taught in lessons. Narain does not seek to evaluate the ethics of curriculum choice - the place which a minority religion might occupy in the Religious Education curriculum of an avowedly Christian school. Rather he accepts the right of the school to define the limits of his religious and cultural expression.

Other Hindu students have also demonstrated a serious attitude towards their studies. Kumār started the CPVE programme in 1987. He wore very fashionable clothes, favouring a bright red, short bulky jacket, termed a 'bomber jacket' in the fashion language of the time. He was rarely seen without his personal stereo around his neck, although he never attempted to listen to it in class. Looking older than his 16 years, he had a rather taciturn demeanour. He had to be pressed to give his views upon a subject. The researcher engaged him in conversation at the beginning of a class before the remaining students had arrived. This was in the November of Kumār's first term in college.

- 1    Researcher (R)      Do you think you have gained anything from
- 2                              college so far?
- 3    Kumār (K)          You get responsibility. It's like outside
- 4                              world here. you can do what you want . . .
- 5                              up to a point; but after that it's up to you.
- 6       R                    Is there anything you don't like about college?
- 7       K                    Communications . . . I don't like communica-
- 8                              tions. You don't learn anything. Same like
- 9                              numeracy (stress on second syllable). I'm
- 10                             doing GCSE . . . but have to go still to
- 11                             numeracy on Thursday morning. I don't learn
- 12                             anything. There's no point . . . and tutorial
- 13                             . . . that's no good.
- 14       R                    Why not?
- 15       K                    Don't learn anything.

The issue Kumār is raising about numeracy (line 9), is that he had been entered for GCSE Mathematics but was required to attend mixed-ability numeracy classes as part of his timetable. He clearly felt that he was not learning enough during these classes.<sup>5</sup>

Kumār gives the clear impression that for him lessons have a purely instrumental purpose in terms of 'learning' (lines 8 and 11). During the conversation, his attitude towards the numeracy class and also the tutorial was clearly disdainful. He appeared to despise lessons which he perceived as failing to teach him adequately.

An issue worthy of examination here is the fact that when Kumār gave these opinions he was in the first term of his college course and had only recently left school. He was in a relatively strange and new environment; a college where many of the students are adults and where he had every reason to be reticent in talking to the teacher he knew to be in charge of his course. Notwithstanding this, he felt able to be quite forthright about his views of the course. This could well have been because the researcher considers himself to have a non-authoritarian approach to his profession and therefore the student would not have been afraid of making such remarks.



There is, however, a possibility that the remarks are specifically indexical to the situation at the beginning of the lesson. The researcher often has to be particularly encouraging in manner in order to elicit a response from students on a particular topic. In this case, Kumār was asked specifically about anything which displeased him, and it is at least a possibility that the student felt constrained to say something, or perhaps to stress his distaste slightly more than was the case. He may have felt he had to express such views because these were the views which he considered were desired by the researcher.<sup>6</sup>

Kumār's comments are also indexical to the situation of talking to the researcher because the latter did not teach numeracy classes. The researcher is unaware of a CPVE student of any cultural background criticising the content of a lesson to the teacher taking that class; whereas it is not unknown for students to complain to one teacher about another teacher or the content of another lesson.

In this particular dialogue Kumār was quite specific about the aspects of his course which he found unsatisfactory. It was unusual for him to voice his dissatisfaction and normally he followed his day-to-day timetable, arriving at lessons on time and doing whatever work was asked of him. He never appeared to want to project his own personality when in a classroom situation, or when mixing with students informally around college.

Some students are so very enthusiastic about gaining further qualifications that they continually explore other possibilities while remaining on the CPVE programme. Shanti is a Swaminārāyan Hindu who commenced the course in 1987. He wore the *tilak* mark characteristic of the sect and clearly renewed this regularly as it was always a bright yellow colour.

Shanti was a very quiet and serious student although with considerable force of character. This no doubt strengthened him sufficiently to enable him to wear the *tilak* - a habit which encouraged a certain number of unpleasant jokes from other students.

During a tutorial class in his first term, the researcher raised the subject of academic ambition and progression to other courses.

- |    |                 |   |
|----|-----------------|---|
| 1  | Shanti (Sh)     | When I first came I applied for First Dip-          |
| 2  |                 | loma but didn't get on. I had qualifications.       |
| 3  |                 | I had five grade threes but Mrs Atkinson* told      |
| 4  |                 | me I should do the CPVE.                            |
| 5  | Researcher (R)  | Did you want CPVE really?                           |
| 6  | Sh              | No Sir, First Diploma.                              |
| 7  | R               | Are you enjoying CPVE?                              |
| 8  | Sh              | Yes Sir. It's OK. But when you first come           |
| 9  |                 | it seems like the course is for if you haven't      |
| 10 |                 | any qualifications.                                 |
| 11 | R               | Well that's not really so.                          |
| 12 | Sh              | Not what anyone says. Just seems like that.         |
| 13 | Another Student | He's (Shanti) doing Sumlock <sup>7</sup> Sir.       |
| 14 | R               | What's that Shanti? An office course?               |
| 15 | Sh              | It's IT <sup>8</sup> Sir, for two years at Sumlock. |
| 16 | R               | Two year YTS.                                       |
| 17 | Sh              | No, not a scheme. You do computer and informa-      |
| 18 |                 | tion technology.                                    |
| 19 | R               | You're doing this after CPVE?                       |
| 20 | Sh              | Might do . . . if I can't get on National.          |

In his opening remark Shanti is clearly expressing a sense of dissatisfaction. Instead of discussing courses towards which he might aim, he focuses upon his failure to gain a place on the course of his first choice. The facility with which he is able to marshal his arguments indicates that he may have been dwelling upon the subject for some time. Perhaps he feels that the researcher is able to remedy this perceived miscarriage of justice.

When the researcher asks whether Shanti is enjoying CPVE (line 7) there is adequate opportunity for the student to discuss aspects of the course which he likes, but he does not specifically respond to the question. Implicitly he is suggesting in his response that he has qualifications, yet this does not appear to be a course which requires them.

Shanti employs language very artfully when he uses the word 'seems', for he avoids any direct criticism of the course.

When mildly contradicted by the researcher, Shanti subtly avoids a confrontation with his teacher by seeking to suggest that there is no direct evidence for his assertion, only that it is an impression he has acquired (line 12).

In fact, Shanti has obviously been investigating an office training scheme outside college. This is disclosed by another student (line 13). The researcher discovered later that Shanti was negotiating with his careers officer about the possibility of transferring to an office-based Youth Training Scheme in the town centre.

Considerable initiative and maturity on the part of Shanti are disclosed here, along with (in line 20) the ability to give an evasive response to a direct question. Here again, he is reminding the researcher of his desire to make academic progress.

The status of the course he is following is clearly very important to Shanti. When asked whether Sumlock is an office course, Shanti redefines it as Information Technology (line 15). In fact the researcher is familiar with this particular Youth Training Scheme and it is a broad-based training programme in general office practice. This involves such aspects as filing, opening mail, letter writing, typing, along with some basic computing and word processing. The latter, however, occupies a relatively small part of the scheme.



Shanti emphasises in two ways the status of the course he is considering. Firstly, he describes it as 'IT' and then as being for 'two years' (line 15). He is making it clear that it is not a short course, a part-time course, or a one-year course; but a much more substantial course. This counter-definition of what the researcher (and probably some of the other students) know to be a conventional Youth Training Scheme may be for the benefit of the researcher, and possibly to seek to raise his own status in the eyes of his peers.<sup>9</sup> It is conceivable, of course, that Shanti may genuinely misunderstand the nature of the programme which he is considering, and that he may not be engaged in any method of constructing his own definition. Shanti denies (line 17) that the programme is a paid scheme. It seems very unlikely that having held discussions with his careers officer, that a student as intelligent as Shanti would fail to appreciate that the course he was considering was a Youth Training Scheme. This would have been explicitly stated by his careers officer, who would have ensured that Shanti appreciated the conditions of work and the training allowance associated with the scheme. In any case, in the experience of the researcher it is a very unusual school-leaver who is not aware that training schemes outside the FE system are almost always YTS programmes.

On balance, therefore, it seems almost certain that Shanti was redefining the course he was considering and in doing so raising its status.

In his final remark Shanti demonstrates how adept he is linguistically in avoiding a question which he perhaps felt might incriminate him. Shanti knows that he is considering leaving CPVE but he is skillful enough not to tell a direct lie. He evades the issue in a non-committal yet polite way, at the same time reminding the researcher that his goal is to get on to BTEC National. In fact Shanti remained on the CPVE programme and subsequently obtained a place on the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies.

The fact that Shanti was negotiating to change to a YTS scheme indicates some degree of dissatisfaction with the CPVE scheme and perhaps with the college.

For some students the transition to a large college is certain to involve a good deal of adjustment. The availability of free periods is a factor which can make quite a strong impression on students familiar with the more rigorous regime of high school. This was true for Laxmi who started the course in 1987. When Laxmi had been in college nearly a term, the researcher taught her class during a tutorial hour, and took the opportunity to ask students to write down their first impressions of the college and any comparisons with school. Laxmi wrote:

A bit confussing because at school we never had free periods, whereas in college you do, which I wasn't use to. But then later I'm in the routine.

More work, but you get to know a lot of people. so I always look forward to college every morning.

Why should free periods be confusing? They are simply entered on a student's timetable and the student is free to study in the library or have a coffee. The word confusing must imply something about the psychological state engendered by the freedom from continual classes. Perhaps this freedom is especially disconcerting when the student comes from a culture which is relatively structured.

The student is perhaps not quite certain whether they should be working for part or all of the free period or whether it is legitimate to spend the entire time in the refectory. In Laxmi's case the confusion may perhaps have been greater because she was a diligent student and there may well have been more cognitive dissonance created by her having free time yet feeling uneasy about spending it in a student coffee bar.

In fact, Laxmi, in common with most students, soon accustomed herself to free periods, yet a cursory inspection of the refectory and the library reveals that only a minority of students avail themselves of the latter provision at any particular time.

Laxmi commences her second paragraph with the phrase 'more work' and this expression seems to imply that there is more structured work imposed by the college rather than the fact that she is simply working harder. There is somewhat of a contrast her to Narain's impression of college.

There may be several possible explanations for this. Laxmi may simply be a very conscientious student, and work hard at her assignments and projects. It may, however, be that students are under-utilised but that Laxmi is the sort of student who finds work to do whatever the level of tuition. Alternatively, as Laxmi was writing her comments rather than speaking, she may have felt reluctant to say anything deleterious about the college.

Not all the Hindu students on the CPVE course had a complete secondary school education in England. Satya was a rather diminutive boy who, a little unusually for the sample, came from Southern India. He was born near the town of Rajahmundry, on the River Godavari, in Āndhra Pradesh. Satya always described himself as coming from Hyderabad, although this city is a considerable distance from his village of origin. The researcher elicited the exact location by showing Satya a large-scale map of India in the college library.

Satya had been in England for four years when he joined the course in September 1988. The researcher asked him to describe his village:

- |   |                |   |
|---|----------------|---|
| 1 | Satya (Sty)    | There is main road and then little road . . . |
| 2 |                | then village. Around village there are like   |
| 3 |                | paddies we call them . . . rice paddies.      |
| 4 | Researcher (R) | Are there paths across the rice paddies?      |
| 5 | Sty            | Paths . . . yes.                              |
| 6 | R              | What about trees near the village?            |



7 Sty There are trees . . . and sometimes dangerous  
8 animals in trees . . . like snakes. Must be  
9 careful walk under trees. This white snake is  
10 there and it bite you from the trees . . .  
11 it even bite you on top of head. (Satya ges-  
tures to the crown of his head several times.)

The researcher asked Satya how long it would take to travel from Hyderabad to his village:

12 Sty If you set off on train at four in the after-  
13 noon . . . at four . . . you get to village  
14 at eight o'clock next morning. That is very  
15 fast train . . . it is express train.  
16 R Could you go by bus?  
17 Sty You can go, but not very safe at night.  
18 They are these bads men in the forest . . .  
19 they stop bus and they maybe kill you. They  
20 rob you. Nobody travel at night.  
21 R Are these robbers fairly common?  
22 Sty They are common . . . very dangerous mens.  
23 One time this woman she travelling a train  
24 near us and she is sleeping and her arm is  
25 outside window.<sup>10</sup> Train is coming into station  
26 and one man he cut off her arm to take gold  
27 rings and jewellery. He just cut off arm, he  
28 just cut off arm and run away.  
29 R Just to steal her jewellery?  
30 Sty He just cut off arm . . . and police do nothing.  
31 They not bothered. (Satya has an expression of  
32 disgust and disdain on his face.) It very  
33 dangerous. I want be Prime Minister of India  
34 and then I make police do things. They takes  
35 bribes. . . . everybody take bribes in India  
36 . . . very bad things.

This conversation took place in a room adjacent to the college library in December 1988 about three months after Satya had joined the course. When Satya was describing the existence of the robbers and the assault on the woman (line 22 onwards) his demeanour became rather intense and he spoke of the Indian police with a tone of disgust. There is no doubt that in his early adolescence Satya had made the transition from a society where life was to some extent precarious, to a country of relative social stability. His comment about becoming Prime Minister (line 33) showed that he still reflected upon the conditions of India and still related personally to the country of his birth.

The interesting point here was that he did not say he wanted to become Prime Minister in a manner which suggested he was joking. He made the utterance with a tone of seriousness as if to him the possibility of becoming Prime Minister was more likely than unlikely.

On one occasion during a lesson in December 1988, the researcher asked him about his school in India:

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Did you learn English there?                 |
| 2  | Satya (Sty)    | We learn not very much English. All we       |
| 3  |                | learn are Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. We    |
| 4  |                | learn Hickory Dickory Dock and Ba Ba Black   |
| 5  |                | Sheep. When I come to England I only know    |
| 6  |                | these.                                       |
| 7  | R              | You don't feel . . . as far as you remember, |
| 8  |                | that you knew any more English?              |
| 9  | Sty            | I only know this kind of thing . . . like    |
| 10 |                | kid's stuff.                                 |

Later on in the same lesson Satya was asked whether young children in his home area were employed and, if so, in what kinds of jobs:

11	Sty	They work for rich peoples too. They go be
12		servants for rich people.
13	R	At what age about?
14	Sty	At six years they go.
15	R	What would they get paid?
16	Sty	Get maybe one pound in one month.
17	R	What do they do with the money?
18	Sty	It go to parents.
19	R	Are there any other jobs children do?
20	Sty	They can work to take animals to the fields.
21		They take buffalo at ten in morning to
22		green fields and then bring it back at four
23		in afternoon. They milk it and look after
24		hens and pigs too. They wash buffalo.
25	R	At what age is this?
26	Sty	Eight or maybe ten.
27	R	If they are working do they go to school?
28	Sty	You can go to school, but you must pay, so not
29		all children go. Then they work. I go to convent
30		. . . but teachers not very good. I have good
31		teacher. I work hard at school. We have story
32		every day for homework.
33	R	What do you mean a story? Was it to read?
34	Sty	They give us the story . . . then learn what it
35		about for homework. Next day, we tell story what
36		it about. I work very hard.

Satya, like Narain, views education as an important activity. The researcher had not asked about the teachers or the standards of teaching, yet Satya volunteered an assessment of the general quality of the teachers (line 30 onwards). He could have used the opportunity to describe any facet of his school life and yet he quickly chose to focus on teaching standards and the degree to which he was working hard. It is possible that the researcher was having a reflexive influence on what was said, in that by describing his own teacher and his own work in positive terms, Satya was seeking to enhance his self-image in the eyes of the researcher. However, by this time, the researcher was



familiar with the level of Satya's work, and it seems unlikely that Satya would try to project a falsely-enhanced portrait of himself. It seems more probable that academic achievement was an important dimension for Satya. When he thought of a school or a college, it was not in terms of making friends or having a social life, but of the quality of the education, according to his criteria.

It was an initial point of departure for this research programme to investigate the reasons given by young Hindus for starting a college course instead of embarking upon one of the other options available such as the Youth Training Scheme or employment.

During a communications class in January 1989 the researcher deliberately initiated a discussion on the transition from school to college. In the following extracts conversational data is included from students other than Hindu students. The first extract primarily involves two Hindu students, a girl and a boy, Niru and Amritlal respectively. They are both extremely extrovert young people with an excellent command of colloquial English. Niru was born in this country and her written English is comparable to that of an indigenous student. Amritlal has lived in England since he was four years of age and his written English is readable but very poor in terms of spelling and punctuation.

Both students commenced the CPVE programme in September 1988 and Niru is a close friend of Laxmi, although the latter was one year ahead and had progressed to the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies. The two girls followed different timetables, and if Laxmi had a free period she frequently waited around on the corridor for Niru to finish classes.

- |   |                |   |
|---|----------------|---|
| 1 | Researcher (R) | Why did you stay on in Education?           |
| 2 | Amritlal (A)   | We've not got many options left, 'cos we    |
| 3 |                | didn't do well in the exams. It's either go |
| 4 |                | on YTS and do some slave labour or come     |

5 here.

6 Niru YTS is a Jew 'cos you only get twenty-

7 nine pounds a week. (Said with some aggression

8 in her voice.)

9 A Twenty-nine-fifty.

10 Niru ALL RIGHT twenty-nine-fifty. I just get

11 that for working weekends.

12 A It's just a waste of time.

13 R Just out of int-- . . . just out of interest

14 . . . though Niru (against a background of

15 general chatter) why don't you work at Macdon-

16 alds?

17 Niru It's a dead-end job.

18 R What sort of work would you like then?

19 Niru Office work.

20 R Do you think you could get a clerical job now?

21 Niru No. It's only if you've got the examination

22 passes. If you haven't you can only go on YTS.

23 R Do you think you could get a job now Amritlal?

24 A Don't think so.

25 Niru I think I could.

26 A Not what I want. I could get a job right.

27 R What could you get?

28 A Just ordinary shelf-filling job.

29 Muhammad (M) I could get a job like that. But it's not the

30 type of job I want.

31 R What do you want Muhammad?

32 M Office work. I was supervisor in a jeans factory.

33 R Was that a factory owned by relatives?

34 M No, just a job. Doesn't matter whether you

35 work for an English bloke or an Indian

36 bloke, it's the same. You start at eight

37 and finish at twelve at night. So it's not

38 worth it.

39 Niru Where's it going to get you anyway?

In this conversation the students are honest to the point of being blunt in the manner in which they express their views. Amritlal (line 2) highlights the dilemma of many CPVE students. That is, they are sufficiently intelligent and perceptive about the world to

comprehend the alternatives which are theoretically available, but they do not possess the academic qualifications with which to attain them.

It is less likely to be teachers who transmit this air of realism to the students, for generally speaking, one of the unacknowledged ethical principles of the college teacher is to refrain from mentioning a student's previous academic performance. The general feeling is that college represents a fresh start for the 16-year old, and emphasising past academic failures would be counterproductive. It seems a probability that Amritlal's analysis of his position, an analysis characterised by a good deal of personal realism, is not a reflection of views received from college staff. There does, however, seem to be a consistency of perspective between Amritlal, Niru and Muhammad. They all disdain work which they perceive as being exploitative in nature. Niru and Muhammad seek 'office work' (lines 19 and 32 respectively) and Amritlal makes it clear that he would not like a shelf-filling job in a supermarket (line 28).

Niru worked very long hours at Macdonalds in the centre of Churchtown and appeared to have considerable disposable income. From conversations overheard in class, she clearly frequented expensive discos, saunas and weight-training clubs, yet she rejects the possibility of working permanently in a fast-food restaurant (line 17).

The atmosphere of realism persists in the view of office work being a reasonable aspiration. These students are not making wild claims about becoming solicitors or merchant bankers. 'Office work' is a sufficient goal. They clearly seek social mobility and construct a relationship between vocation and social status. At the end of the extract Niru wants to know where a job will 'get' her. She is clearly goal-oriented and seeks status in terms of employment. Education is seen as the medium through which social mobility may be achieved.



It is interesting that a particularly vituperative disdain is reserved for YTS. For Amritlal YTS is 'slave labour' (line 4) and for Niru it is a 'Jew'. The use of the racial stereotype by Niru is interesting and provides the researcher with an initial notion that Niru may not generalise from her own experiences of racialism, to formulating general rules about how to speak of other racial groups or minorities.

The strong objections to YTS are interesting. In the first case the terms used are non-rational. They denigrate the training scheme without explaining the reasons for its supposed inadequacy. The second interesting factor is that the unanimity of feeling is so very strong. It is worth reflecting upon the origins of this YTS stereotype.

The YTS is clearly a very varied scheme. Managing agents range from large national bodies such as Industry Training Boards to small private training agencies. Some are very well organised, effective training units; others less so. It is possible that the students have only met trainees with poor experiences of the scheme; or alternatively they have developed an antagonistic ideology towards state training schemes. Later in the discussion, the students returned to the subject of YTS. A student called Tom starts the debate by mentioning the name of a private managing agent in Churchtown:

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Tom (T)        | YTS. Do it at Millers*. <sup>11</sup>         |
| 2  | Researcher (R) | What do they say about that?                  |
| 3  | T              | Don't like it. Start in one department;       |
| 4  |                | always changing; get tret like a bucket.      |
| 5  | Muhammad (M)   | Someone told me they are getting a thousand   |
| 6  |                | pounds for one person there. No wonder they   |
| 7  |                | keep pushing us . . . these careers officers  |
| 8  |                | . . . they getting half of it.                |
| 9  | Niru           | They're TELLING US, TELLING US, TELLING US.   |
|    |                | (students get very excited here - laughing    |
| 10 |                | a lot). Load of people from our school went   |
| 11 |                | there. They're always pushing us to go there. |
| 12 |                | The careers people say, 'Is it worth you      |
| 13 |                | going to college?' and that 'Why not go on    |

14 YTS?' They really push it.

15 Amritlal (A) Sir . . . I was forced to go there. I said

16 I'm not going there no way.

17 Niru They say go there and get experience and

18 you might get a job.

The group solidarity with regard to a uniform detestation of YTS is quite surprising here. Niru's first remark (line 9) was made in an increasingly piercing shriek while she was still laughing in agreement at what Muhammad had said. Her noisy repetitive interjection stimulated the remainder of the class (about twelve students) to hoots and shrieks of laughter directed at YTS. It was quite impossible to separate this out into dialogue.

The researcher was interested in the members' agreement on the role of the careers officers, and the manner in which the alleged coercion by the careers staff was resisted by the young people. If it is assumed provisionally that fairly strong arguments for joining YTS were placed before the young people, then there is evidence here that Amritlal and Niru exhibited considerable independence of mind. Amritlal uses the word 'forced' (line 15). Amritlal had not been a YTS trainee and it can be assumed that he was referring to the pressure which he felt had been exerted upon him, to join a YTS scheme. The students are clearly not persuaded by the argument that YTS provides work experience and that this is a tangible help in obtaining a permanent job. Their attitude contrasts somewhat with that of Shanti who was considering a YTS placement.

The researcher suggested to the group that it might be possible in some jobs to start near the bottom and work up to a senior position some years later. This was rejected. An English girl, Jacqueline, responds first:

1 Jacqueline (J) But that's the hard way. If you have qual-  
2 ifications you don't have to start at the  
3 bottom. You can start with a decent job.

4	Amritlal (A)	And if you do change jobs you've got the
5		qualifications to go somewhere else.
6	Researcher (R)	Do your parents think it is better to be at
7		college?
8	Whole class	YES.
9	Niru	You can't get a job after CPVE. You need
10		to work your way up.
11	R	What you say may be true . . . you need further
12		courses. Do your parents realise you are
13		doing a foundation course?
14	Muhammad (M)	My Dad thinks I'm doing 'A' levels.
15	Whole class	(General laughter).
16	R	What do your parents think Niru?
17	Niru	They want me to. 'Cos my uncle, he's more
18		educated and now he's doing a degree in
19		Maths. He came here.
20	R	Would I know him?
21	Niru	No. He was an 'A' level student. (General
		laughter.)
22	A	That was a bit cheeky sir.

The final brief good-humoured exchange with Amritlal and Niru, has its basis in the anxiety of the CPVE students in general, that the course they are taking is very low-level academically and is not particularly respected by employers when considering them for jobs.

Niru feels that she would not obtain a job directly after CPVE (line 9). When she said that the researcher would not know her uncle (line 21), the expression on her face revealed that at first she did not understand why the remainder of the class was laughing so much. The class was assuming (erroneously, as it happens) that the researcher only taught CPVE students and never met 'A' level students, clearly perceived by them as being of higher status. This was the first indication that the students in general, and clearly Amritlal, assumed that the CPVE teachers had a corresponding status among their colleagues to that of CPVE students among the general student body.



The Hindu students appear to be very concerned about academic achievement at college.

- |   |                |   |
|---|----------------|---|
| 1 | Researcher (R) | Do you feel you are getting value out of    |
| 2 |                | the CPVE course?                            |
| 3 | Niru           | Yeh, 'cos next year you can do BTEC         |
| 4 |                | First, and then BTEC National after         |
| 5 |                | that, and after that you can go to college. |
| 6 | R              | Well, you could.                            |
| 7 | Niru           | Like if we were on BTEC First now we        |
| 8 |                | could be doing BTEC National next year.     |

This intense preoccupation with academic progress is not reflected in Niru's general college work. She has a very friendly, sociable and extrovert personality and talks a great deal in class, to the detriment of her college work. She is also given to outbursts of unrestrained behaviour. A mathematics teacher banned her from his Information Technology class because of her swearing, and although she is small, petite and takes a pride in her appearance, she frequently hits boys who say things to which she objects.

Although she does not exert herself very much at doing college work, Niru resents teachers who she feels patronise her with work which is too easy. In the following extract she is referring to a student teacher who taught the class for a short time in January 1989. Niru was not actually aware that the teacher was a student. The extract was recorded in January 1989.

- |   |                |  |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1 | Researcher (R) | Do you feel what you study on CPVE is    |
| 2 |                | worthwhile?                              |
| 3 | Jacqueline (J) | Some of it's too easy.                   |
| 4 | Niru           | Some of it's . . . yest--                |
| 5 | J              | Like Mrs Taylor* . . . Has anyone used a |
| 6 |                | telephone?                               |

7	Niru	Oh God.
8	J	She thinks we're simpletons.
9	Niru	And people who did City and Guilds can do
10		GCSE; but we did GCSE and got grade
11		F say and we can't retake it.

In the final remark Niru is criticising the college's refusal to let her retake a larger number of GCSE subjects. The college, with a finite budget, does not have the accommodation or teaching resources to allow all students who apply, to retake GCSE subjects. A student is required to have obtained at school a minimum of Grade E in a subject before the college will allow them to retake it and try to obtain a Grade C, which is the entry requirement for 'A' levels or BTEC National. Niru is complaining at a perceived injustice and the alleged manner in which some students circumvent the system.

Sometimes students are sufficiently outspoken to describe the popular image of Churchtown Tertiary College. Amritlal rarely needed much encouragement to be outspoken. Usually quiet when he was working, a direct question normally elicited an unequivocal response. The researcher raised the issue of the image of the college amongst parents and other adults.

1	Researcher (R)	Did you want to come here?
2	Amritlal (A)	I did, but people said it was a doss.
3	R	Did they? Really? (smiling)
4	A	<u>Really</u> . (laughing) <u>Everyone</u> in Churchtown
5		thinks this place is a doss; 'specially
6		Block Two. They think people sit in there with
7		needles stickin' out of their arms.
8	R	Do they really think its that bad? Is this
9		parents or students?
10	A	Both . . . 'specially Asian parents . . .
11		won't let their daughters come here. They
12		send them to Catholic College*. It's very
13		strict there . . . like school . . . no free

14 periods, just work all day.  
 15 R Didn't you want to go to Catholic College? \*  
 16 A Not really . . . I made up me mind to work  
 17 hard here, so that is what I'm doing. Catholic  
 18 College's\* very strict.  
 19 R Do you like the free periods here?  
 20 A It's more like being grown up. It's good.  
 21 I'm glad I came here; but sometimes we don't  
 22 do a lot of work.

There is much in this extract that is reminiscent of the data provided by Narain two years previously. In response to the researcher's original question, Amritlal answers positively, immediately confirming to the teacher that he has made a definite decision to become a student and that he treats his college life seriously. However, he then contrasts his own attitude towards college with that of other unnamed people. It is noticeable that these people are not 'relatives' or 'my Dad' or 'me brother' but simply 'people'. This is an astute achievement by Amritlal, for it leaves open the possibility of distancing himself from his assertion. If the researcher had reacted strongly to this claim against 'his' college, it would have been much easier for Amritlal to deny the truth of the statement than if he had claimed it had been said by a close relative or named friend. The use of the pejorative word 'doss' carries the same connotations as when used by Narain.

When questioned about his assertion Amritlal says 'really' (line 4) slowly, for effect, and in an increasingly high-pitched voice as he nears the end of the word. In one word he encompasses two important statements. Firstly, he is emphasising that people actually do think of the college in the terms described, and secondly he is relaying his astonishment that the researcher has not sensed what Amritlal regards as a self-evident feeling throughout Churchtown. He chuckles after saying the word as if he cannot understand why the researcher has not come across this viewpoint before. The hyperbole which follows, (line 5) claiming that all people in Churchtown think the college



to be a 'doss', further emphasises Amritlal's incredulity at his teacher's lack of appreciation of a situation.

Block Two is the college student area with the Students Union office. It is a large well-equipped detached building with facilities more reminiscent of a polytechnic than a college. There are cafeterias on two floors and it is generally very crowded for most of the college day. As far as college staff and counsellors are aware the circulation of drugs in Block Two amongst the student population is minimal. Amritlal's second hyperbole (line 7) may simply be his own use of exaggeration for emphasis, in order to try to express the disquiet felt by some Asian parents. On the other hand, it is possible that he is reflecting quite literally and accurately the mistaken impression held by some people.

It seems likely that the former interpretation is the most probable because in his next utterance (line 10) Amritlal does not dwell on the subject of drugs but changes the topic to one of parents not wanting daughters to attend the college presumably because of some imagined moral danger. The evidence of this utterance is reminiscent of Narain's evidence about Catholic college.

Amritlal, however, did not wish to attend Catholic college. It appears that the notion of hard work and presumably academic success is central to his perception of college life, and that any supposed moral ambiguity at the Tertiary college is not of overriding concern to either himself or his parents (line 16).

In his last utterance of the conversation Amritlal returns to the subject of work. He likes the freedom but also wants to work hard. When he says 'we don't do a lot of work' he is not making a comment about lack of effort on the part of students, but really making an evaluation of the degree to which the college teachers extend their students academically. Amritlal, like Laxmi, also mentions free periods (line 13) and clearly their

availability has made some impression upon him. He appears (line 20) to value the sense of responsibility and freedom inherent in the system.

From the preliminary data provided in this Chapter it is possible to formulate some general statements about the Hindu students.

These are that Hindu students:

- (i) tend not to have a closed view of their own religion and culture. They are willing to appreciate the perspectives of other cultures;
- (ii) treat education as a serious endeavour.
- (iii) tend to accept as legitimate the authority of schools and colleges;
- (iv) appear in some ways to prefer a formal, goal-oriented education system.
- (v) seek work which has a high social status within the community;
- (vi) perceive education as an important means of upward social mobility.

These statements are based on data from a small number of students, but future chapters examine these themes from different points of view, and seek to present data which may or may not falsify these provisional generalisations.

## CHAPTER 4    APPROACHES TO RELIGION

The Hindu students constituting the sample for this research were rather undemonstrative about their religion. In many situations it was only their Hindu names which indicated their religious background and culture. In a classroom, for example, among an ethnically-mixed group of students, Muslim students were often more forthcoming and eager to discuss their religion than Hindu students. In a one-to-one situation, however, many of the Hindu students talked almost endlessly and in some cases the researcher felt that he was acting as a therapist, such was the eagerness of one or two students to discuss their innermost feelings in relation to religious belief.

Let us consider one of these students, Hari, interviewed in February 1987. Hari was a quiet and serious young man who at the time of the interviews had already completed one year on the CPVE programme and was in the process of following a second year. This was very unusual as, normally, students were eager either to obtain a job or to progress to another course. Hari, however, was in effect using the CPVE programme to improve his academic profile and obtain more GCE 'O' level passes. He had come to college in September 1985 with a pass in 'O' level English Language and during that academic year had obtained further passes in Sociology and Art, in addition to satisfactorily completing the CPVE programme.

In his second year of the CPVE Hari was following GCE 'O' level courses in Mathematics and Photography and hoped to subsequently follow a BTEC Art and Design programme. Hari possessed a quiet and restrained personality, yet he dressed in modern clothes and had many friends. He was articulate and employed relatively sophisticated words such as 'status' and 'hierarchy' in his everyday language. He had presumably acquired these linguistic skills during his study of sociology.



Interviews with Hari revealed very interesting facets of the religious life to which he adhered and yet which would normally have remained undisclosed. As is often the case with qualitative research, relationships and social customs are revealed almost accidentally in the course of the interaction between researcher and respondent. One morning in February 1987 the researcher asked Hari if it would be possible to have a discussion at lunchtime and whether Hari would have enough time to get something to eat. Hari immediately replied that he had plenty of time because it was his day for fasting. This immediately provided a useful line of investigation at the subsequent discussion.

1	Researcher (R)	I was very interested that you said . . . that
2		you are fasting. Is it just one day a week . . .
3		Thursday?
4	Hari (H)	Just Thursday . . . only one day.
5	R	Why are you actually fasting? Is it for something
6		in particular or . . . just in general?
7	H	To do better in my Maths . . . better in my college
8		work.
9	R	That's really interesting. But who . . . what I
10		don't understand is . . . who told you to fast?
11		Was it your idea or perhaps your parents?
12	H	The priest said so. He read my palm and said it
13		would be good to fast on Thursdays . . . then I
14		would improve at Maths.
15	R	But how did he come to read your palm? Was it at
16		your house or the temple?
17	H	My grandfather . . . well he died . . . and the
18		priest he came to do like the rites, and my mother
19		asked him to read my palm.
20	R	How long ago was this? So how long have you been
21		fasting?
22	H	It was a year ago about.
23	R	And was this the priest from the main Hindu temple?
24	H	One of them.
25	R	Did he have . . . was he one of the official
26		priests there?
27	H	Yes.

28 R Can you describe to me what happens when you  
 29 have a palm reading?  
 30 H He bends your fingers right back and feels the big  
 31 muscle here (indicating the mass of muscle at  
 32 the base of the thumb). Then he looks at the main  
 33 lines.  
 34 R That's absolutely fascinating! Fascinating!  
 35 (smiling). Can I go back to fasting. How was it  
 36 decided Thursday would be the fasting day?  
 37 H My parents fast on that day . . . so it was the  
 38 same.  
 39 R And what is the real purpose of fasting? What  
 40 really are you supposed to do? Are you supposed  
 41 to think about your college work all the time?  
 42 H Yes . . . just think about it. Try to do better.

This dialogue was very interesting primarily because it established, at least in the case of one student, a direct relationship between religious practice and the educational system. When the researcher asked a question which sought to determine the purpose of fasting, (line 5), he was surprised and fascinated by the response. Hari was not fasting for a spiritual purpose but for a very practical one. he is very precise about the purpose of fasting - that of improving his ability at Mathematics (line 7).

It is interesting that Hari is so honest about the purpose of fasting. As a social member it seems unlikely that he would discuss his attempts at self-improvement with other students, but he is unconcerned about so doing with the researcher. In addition, Hari is very precise about the subject in which he will improve, that is Mathematics; and there is no real explanation for this specificity. Even if it is accepted that fasting may result in some improvement in college work, there seems no acceptable reason why the effect should be subject-specific. The reply (line 7) provides further evidence for the concern with educational progress which was apparent in the previous chapter - for example, in interviews with Narain and Kumar.

When asked why Thursday was selected as the day for fasting, Hari simply says that it is the same day on which his parents fast (line 37). This suggests the operation of a distinct system of collaboration within the family. The response suggests that parental and offspring fasting are mutually supportive.

This indicates that Hari relates to the 'family' as a distinct membership category and is not intending to divest himself of this membership as often happens with English teenagers. Hari is accepting the common stock of knowledge of the family and applying it in the context of selecting a day for fasting.

In some ways it is interesting that Hari is prepared to have this conversation with the researcher at all. Hindu students do not normally discuss 'fasting' in everyday conversation with either students or staff. In this they tend to differ from Muslim students who raise the subject to a high profile during the month of Ramadan, and frequently discuss the matter. Hari must have been aware that the notion of fasting for a particular practical end is not a normal part of a Westernised teacher's social strategies, yet Hari is forthright and honest in his description. This is an accomplishment in itself. Hari is recounting to the researcher what he sees as a relevant identity for himself and a relevant methodic practice in his social world; and he is doing this to an individual who he cannot be absolutely certain will be sympathetic towards his alternative world view.

Hari continues to explain the nature and requirements of his fast. The researcher was interested whether the process was as rigorous as the month of Ramadan for Muslims.

- |   |                |  |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1 | Researcher (R) | Do you have anything at all to eat when you are      |
| 2 |                | fasting? Is it all day you fast?                     |
| 3 | Hari (H)       | Midnight to midnight . . . twelve o'clock last night |
| 4 |                | to twelve o'clock tonight. I have only one meal      |
| 5 |                | and that is when I get home tonight . . . but I      |

6                    drink tea, coffee, fruit juice during the day. I  
7                    must have the meal all at once.

8        R            Sorry + + + what's that? . . . all at once?

9        H            I cannot have seconds. I must eat the meal all at  
10                   once. This cousin I have . . . she fasts too. She  
11                   is a barrister and she has a high status, so it is  
12                   difficult to find a husband for her because the  
13                   husband must be of higher status.

14       R            Ah, I see . . . that's very interesting.

15       H            So she is fasting for a husband (he smiles).

16       R            And how much does she fast?

17       H            Tuesday and Thursday I think.

18       R            How long do you think you'll go on fasting? When will  
19                   the priest tell you to stop?

20       H            It's up to me. I can stop when my Maths improves.

21       R            So it's up to you . . . not to say the priest or  
22                   your parents?

23       H            Yeh.

24       R            Is the fasting helping?

25       H            Yes it's helping.

26       R            Is it quite difficult to keep it up?

27       H            Well you feel hungry at the beginning . . . but it  
28                   passes.

29       R            Can I just ask you a bit more about the priest?

30                   Say for example, when he comes to your home do  
31                   you give him any food or . . . say hospitality?

32       H            Well, we give him some food and a drink. He must  
33                   have a metal cup.

34       R            Must he? . . . That's interesting. Are they made of  
35                   shiny metal and a bit like tumblers?

36       H            Yes.

37       R            That's it. I think I've seen them at an Asian  
38                   family's home . . . some friends of mine. They  
39                   must come from India - I've never seen them sold  
40                   in this country.

41       H            I think so. He must always have a metal cup.

42       R            Why's that do you think?

43       H            I don't know.



This particular series of exchanges contains some interesting factual data about Hindu practices and customs, but before examining some of these it is worth noticing one of the methods which Hari uses to maintain a successful collaborative enterprise with the researcher. On several occasions he volunteers additional information to that required simply to answer the question. For example, he indicates that he must eat his meal "all at once", (line 7). This immediately interests the researcher who asks for clarification. This strategy maintains the natural flow of the conversation and Hari repeats the process several times. He volunteers information (line 10) about his cousin who is also fasting and later describes how the priest must always drink from a metal cup, (line 32).

Hari's ability to demonstrate this method is a social accomplishment which not only assists the corporate research enterprise, but in a sense allows Hari to control the direction of the conversation. It also indicates that he has appreciated the nature of the interaction with the researcher and far from reacting passively to questions has understood the general nature of the information which interests the researcher. The latter never sought to explain to any respondents the specific type of data in which he was interested. In fact, to do so would have been to negate one of the prime advantages of the methodology; that is, the possibility of unanticipated data being furnished.

Also Hari has intuited something of the approach of the project for he uses the word "status" (line 11) to add an extra dimension of explanation. It would be sufficiently interesting to mention that he had a cousin who was a barrister and who was fasting in order to find a suitable husband; but the additional analysis concerning status demonstrates not only a capacity to analyse his own family circumstances in sociological terms, but the ability to provide the researcher with the very type of data he is seeking.

In fact, Hari has demonstrated his control of methods which enable him to render the conversation 'orderly'. He has arranged the sequence of utterances so that the latter flow smoothly and not only have meaning for the researcher but also transmit the aspects of his culture which Hari wishes to disclose. Hari shows that he is able to move away from his normal role category of 'student' and assume another role category, that of research collaborator. The efficiency with which he accomplishes this is evident both from the above analysis and by considering whether in a student category context he would wish to reveal what he has disclosed in the above utterances. The answer would almost certainly be in the negative, and not only this, but Hari has been able to perform the category transition remarkably quickly.

Not all students were as willing as Hari to provide information about their culture. Ramesh was a contemporary of Hari and very fashionable in appearance. He wore his hair long, and normally dressed in expensive clothes. He frequently wore a tie which was a little unusual for college students.

The extracts which follow are taken from conversations held in March and April 1987. Having explained the purpose of the discussion the researcher asked Ramesh about the Hindu temple and whether he attended very often.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Ramesh (Ra)    | No. I'm not very interested in religion.           |
| 2  | Researcher (R) | Well . . . all right. I appreciate that . . . um   |
| 3  |                | + + + but do you go at all . . . say for social    |
| 4  |                | occasions?   |
| 5  | Ra             | Yes . . . when there's an event on . . . something |
| 6  |                | special . . . but not for praying or anything      |
| 7  |                | like that.   |
| 8  | R              | Do you keep any festivals or customs? I can see    |
| 9  |                | you're wearing that coloured band.                 |
| 10 | Ra             | Yeh . . . that's for looking after my sister. I do |
| 11 |                | things like that. We have taken on an English way  |
| 12 |                | of life.   |
| 13 | R              | Were you born here then?                           |

14     Ra                    Yes . . . my parents have been here twenty-five  
 15                            years.  
 16     R                    What about festivals like *Holi*<sup>1</sup> . . . have you heard  
 17                            of that?  
 18     Ra                    Heard of it. I know about it, but we don't keep  
 19                            it at all.

The response from Ramesh was very different to that from Hari, and his first utterance indicates something of his views. Although the purpose of the discussion had been explained in great detail, Ramesh was keen from the outset to state his indifference to religion and more specifically, by implication, to his own religious culture. It can only be supposed that Ramesh's feelings in this respect were fairly strong because he is making no apparent attempt to provide the kind of answers he might suppose the researcher to be seeking. After all, the researcher is also the tutor in charge of Ramesh's course and yet he does not appear willing to make an effort to provide information. The researcher on the other hand, knows him to be normally a courteous, intelligent and helpful student, and the assumption must be that Ramesh has a fairly strong antagonism to religion which is overriding his assumed willingness to cooperate.

This is reinforced in Ramesh's second utterance where he at first concedes that he does sometimes attend the temple but not for religious purposes (line 6). It is clearly very important to Ramesh to make it clear that he does not regard himself as a member of a religious culture or group. He is reasonably happy to concede that he attends the temple and thus, by implication, accepts some of the social patterns of his culture, but by using the phrase "or anything like that" he is specifically excluding himself from the category of people who are practising Hindus.

Later Ramesh concedes that he is complying with the ceremony of *Rakṣa Bandhan*<sup>2</sup> whereby brightly-coloured threads are tied around the wrist as a reminder that a brother promises to look after his sister (line 10). Ramesh says "I do things like that". In this



utterance he is classifying cultural activity into the religious and the secular. He is prepared to participate in secular but not religious cultural activity. This is supported by his next utterance, "We have taken on an English way of life". Ramesh is expressing his sentiments rather more strongly here. He appears to be asserting his identity, not as a Hindu who has allowed his practice of religion to lapse, but as a full member of English society.

Throughout this extract Ramesh demonstrates an interesting skill in maintaining the conversational exchange by developing his responses in a particular format. In the second and third utterances of the extract Ramesh commences each utterance by conceding that he participates in Hindu culture to some extent, but then pointing out the limitations of this. He repeats this method in the final utterance when he admits to knowing something about the *Hoṭ* ceremony, but immediately adds the rider that he and his family do not participate in any way.

In an extract from a later conversation Ramesh develops his attitude to his religion a little more, but one or two of these themes can still be identified.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Would you mind if I asked whether your parents are      |
| 2  |                | very religious?   |
| 3  | Ramesh (Ra)    | No, not at all. My mother is a bit religious - she      |
| 4  |                | fasts one day a year. As a family we have lots of       |
| 5  |                | different friends from different religions. My father   |
| 6  |                | has some close friends who are Muslims and he has       |
| 7  |                | some Sikh friends, and my mother has English friends.   |
| 8  |                | That's why we don't keep to our religion really 'cos    |
| 9  |                | we have lots of different friends.                      |
| 10 | R              | What about language? Do you speak Gujarāṭi at home?     |
| 11 | Ra             | No . . . we are Panjabis anyway. We are the only        |
| 12 |                | Panjabi Brahmin family in Churchtown. We go to Sikh     |
| 13 |                | temples more than Hindu temples. We understand Panjabi; |
| 14 |                | my father speaks Panjabi and English . . . he comes     |
| 15 |                | from East Africa . . . and my mother speaks Hindi       |



16                                      and English. She comes from India from Bengal and  
 17                                      she went to a convent . . . then she learned Panjabi  
 18                                      because she was marrying my father.

There is a certain lack of logic when Ramesh attributes his lack of affiliation to Hinduism to the diversity of family friends, (line 9). The final paragraph exposes what might be interpreted as a measure of elitism when Ramesh notes (line 12) that he is from a Brahmin family. There was no real need to mention *varṇa* here and it would appear that he had a specific reason for mentioning the fact. The reason may be related to establishing social status, or to making a personal statement about the fact that he knows his *varṇa* and therefore is not totally ignorant of his culture. A possible interest in social status is reinforced by the comment that his mother attended a convent school, (line 17). Again there was no overwhelming reason why this should be mentioned.

The researcher then asked whether the family maintained a shrine or any religious artifacts at home.

1	Ramesh (Ra)	No shrine at home.
2	Researcher (R)	What about books . . . say the <i>Gītā</i> . . . would
3		you have that?
4	Ra	We have a copy of that in English . . . I read it
5		a bit sometimes but not much.
6	R	One final question . . . at college do you ever get
7		the feeling that you belong to a different culture
8		or that people treat you differently?
9	Ra	No; don't feel a stranger at all in college. I talk
10		to anyone.

Ramesh appears to have revealed here rather more of an interest in religion than has been suggested previously. He indicates (line 5) that he does read the *Bhagavad Gītā* in

English, and even though this may be to a minimal extent, it does suggest some interest in his culture.

In the next question the researcher was trying to elicit feelings of cultural alienation which Ramesh may have felt in a predominantly non-Asian environment. He chose to respond to the question from his own perspective; that is by saying "I talk to anyone" (line 10). He makes no comment upon the reaction of others to himself but responds by commenting upon his own openness towards others.

Ramesh completed his CPVE year very successfully and gained high grades in both GCE 'O' level English and Mathematics. He was accepted directly on to the BTEC National Diploma programme in Business Studies, but did not complete the year and left to take up a post with a clearing bank.

Rajesh was a contemporary of Ramesh, but he dressed less fashionably and was less out-going and articulate in personality. Nevertheless, he was a mature, sensible and conscientious student whose ambitions lay in the direction of science. He had opted for the Mechanical Engineering course on CPVE, but there was evidence that his academic ambitions would be thwarted by a poor grasp of mathematics. Rajesh was born in Britain. His father came from Kenya and his mother from Bombay. During a free period one afternoon in March 1987 the researcher was able to ask Rajesh about his religion.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | I know this is a bit personal but . . . how do you     |
| 2  |                | feel about your religion? Does it matter a lot to you? |
| 3  | Rajesh (Raj)   | Not really. I am not very religious.                   |
| 4  | R              | Do you go to the temple very much?                     |
| 5  | Raj            | No . . . not very much. Only special events . . .      |
| 6  |                | and I don't really want to go then.                    |
| 7  | R              | I have some Hindu friends and I know many Hindu        |
| 8  |                | families have a shrine in the house. Do you have a     |
| 9  |                | shrine or anything like that?                          |
| 10 | Raj            | We have a shrine.                                      |

11 R Do you bother with it?  
 12 Raj Well once a week I pray.  
 13 R And what about the scriptures? Have you heard of the  
 14 *Gītā* . . . the *Bhagavad Gītā* . . . for example?  
 15 Raj Oh yes . . . I have read the *Gītā*. Not Sanskrit.  
 16 I have in English. I read it all through and *Rāmāyaṇa*.  
 17 I think all religions the same . . . you know, like  
 18 prodigal son in the Bible, . . . you can find same  
 19 story in Hindu scriptures.  
 20 R It's very interesting you should say that because  
 21 that's more or less how I feel about religion.  
 22 Raj We believe Kṛṣṇa, then Moses, then Jesus, then  
 23 Muhammad . . . they are all the same.

In one sense this conversational exchange follows the pattern established by Ramesh. That is, an initial denial of involvement in, or interest in religion, followed by gradual revelations that an underlying commitment does exist. Early in the conversation (lines 3 and 6) there is a general denial of interest in religion, but gradually (line 12) there is a statement of actual involvement in religious praxis, and later (line 15) a statement which can only be interpreted as signifying an interest in religious issues.

It is possible that what is revealed in the conversations with Rajesh and Ramesh is a gradual redefinition of the nature of the verbal exchanges, and also of the role of the researcher in the conversation. Neither Rajesh nor Ramesh were routinely taught by the researcher and they may well have reacted as would many people when a relative stranger asks about religious affiliation; that is they are cautious and circumspect. However, the researcher gives verbal clues as the conversation progresses, which indicate that he is sensitive to Hindu culture. For example, he says, "I have some Hindu friends" (line 7); and also "Have you heard of the *Gītā*?" (line 13). These clues allow the student to make a substantive redefinition of the situation and to begin to reveal something of his spiritual belief. This redefinition is an accomplishment by the student and takes place extremely rapidly, within the space of a few relatively-short, verbal exchanges.



This process is an interesting example of reflexivity in that the researcher and the student are both involved in constructing an account of one aspect of society. At the same time the account which is being produced is continually influencing the interpretive work being performed by the members, that is, researcher and student. Thus Rajesh at first constructs an account implying little interest in religion, but the supportive comments of the researcher encourage him to repair this account to one implying much more involvement with religious matters. Thus, the notion of what religion signifies to Rajesh is not constructed once and for all, but this sense of social structure in Rajesh and the researcher is maintained by interpretive work which proceeds continually and is rarely broken.

Rajesh displays considerable sophistication of thought in constructing his hypothesis of the unity of all religions (line 17). These remarks illustrate the indexical nature of the expressions being used by Rajesh. His expressions are rather vague and require interpretive work by the researcher - for example, in the sentence, "I think all religions the same". This comment is indexical to a situation where Rajesh perceives himself talking to another social member who is familiar with religious ideas. The concept that all religions are "the same" is complex. It is a concept that accepts differences in scripture and ritual but regards these as superficial. It is a concept which accepts a sense of unity in the spiritual dimension of human existence. The researcher is invited to appreciate this complexity in the utterance of the student. Similarly, when Rajesh says that Kṛṣṇa, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad are all "the same" (line 23), there again remains considerable interpretive work to be performed. Rajesh uses these indexical expressions because he is confident that the researcher can perform the required interpretive work. Lengthier and more precise expressions are unnecessary as far as Rajesh is concerned.



Later the researcher asked Rajesh about religious education at school.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Did you do RE at school? Was it mostly Christian?             |
| 2  | Rajesh (Raj)   | Yes, all Christian.   |
| 3  | R              | But didn't you feel a little bit . . . well, <u>awkward</u> . |
| 4  |                | . . . no, that's not really what I mean . . . well,           |
| 5  |                | being a Hindu and having to study Christianity?               |
| 6  | Raj            | (Thinking carefully). A little bit, but there were            |
| 7  |                | one or two from other religions in the class.                 |
| 8  | R              | Well, did the teacher ever ask you to describe your           |
| 9  |                | religion . . . to tell the rest of the class about it?        |
| 10 | Raj            | No.   |
| 11 | R              | What about your parents . . . again I know this is a          |
| 12 |                | bit personal . . . are they very religious?                   |
| 13 | Raj            | Not really, I wouldn't say. My mother keeps the main          |
| 14 |                | holy days, that is all. My father is doing a BA               |
| 15 |                | degree at the Polytechnic in Social Studies.                  |
| 16 | R              | Oh, that's interesting. Did he come here for his              |
| 17 |                | first year?   |
| 18 | Raj            | No, he went straight to the Polytechnic.                      |
| 19 | R              | Is he at all religious then?                                  |
| 20 | Raj            | No, but he tells me stories from time to time . . .           |
| 21 |                | like the <i>Rāmāyaṇa</i> .                                    |

A good example of an indexical expression occurs when Rajesh is talking about his parents, (line 14). On being asked whether they are very religious, Rajesh gives a fairly straightforward answer for his mother, but the response concerning his father is rather oblique. Nevertheless, the researcher does not interpret this utterance as plurisemantic. It is interpreted as approximately, "my father is not personally spiritual as far as I can tell, but he understands and appreciates religious ideas because of his education in the social sciences". This may in fact be the wrong interpretation, but the researcher does not hear the utterance as having multiple meanings. He constructs a specific meaningful character for the utterance from the context of the discussion. The researcher however

does not totally abandon his inquiry. He takes up the matter again (line 19) and receives a response which is at least not at variance with his previous interpretation.

Not all students exhibited an initial diffidence in talking about their religion. Narain, always talkative and sociable, needed little prompting to discuss his religion. The researcher had many separate discussions with Narain during the Spring and Summer terms of 1987, and the amount of data thus generated was so extensive that a great deal of selection has been necessary. The researcher first raised the subject of the Hindu temple.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | What is the temple like? . . . What are the most                     |
| 2  |                | important things there?  |
| 3  | Narain (N)     | There are statues and pictures of many Gods there                    |
| 4  |                | and we worship these. They are very holy. <i>Mātaji</i> <sup>3</sup> |
| 5  |                | ... she is the mother . . . she has eight hands right,               |
| 6  |                | and she is very holy. We worship her and <i>Jalaram Bāpa</i>         |
| 7  |                | . . . he is the father.  |
| 8  | R              | Were these Gods real people?   |
| 9  | N              | They are Gods right, they are holy. They were real                   |
| 10 |                | people, like saints, right.  |
| 11 | R              | And there are statues of Kṛṣṇa and Rād- -                            |
| 12 | N              | Kṛṣṇa yes. Rādhā. Nāg Devta <sup>4</sup> ... he is a snake God,      |
| 13 |                | male snake God and very powerful. He is very holy.                   |
| 14 |                | Snake Gods are very powerful. Also there is Ganesh <sup>5</sup>      |
| 15 |                | . . . he is the one with the trunk right.                            |

During many of these discussions Narain became very excited. He obviously had so much to talk about that at times he stumbled over his words or simply could not restrain himself with one logical strand of explication. In the last utterance for example, his face lit up at the mention of Kṛṣṇa, but he passed on without pause to mention Nāg Devta.

It is interesting that he holds concepts of the Gods and Goddesses as "real" people (line 9). This is probably part of what Schutz calls the 'stock of knowledge at hand'<sup>6</sup> - the socially-derived knowledge which members acquire by virtue of living in and being part of the world. Narain refers (line 5) to Mātājī as having "eight hands" and yet in his next utterance he sees no necessity to expand upon this or explain in any way how an individual with eight hands could be "real". This indicates that there is some probability that the concept of the 'reality' of the Gods is part of his 'stock of knowledge' - part of the inter-subjective world in which he has been raised.

In another discussion the researcher asked Narain about the reasons he had for attending the Hindu temple.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | What is the most important thing you gain from                           |
| 2  |                | going to the Hindu temple?   |
| 3  | Narain (N)     | Meet friends . . . discuss about things.                                 |
| 4  | R              | Are these people who you don't see at college?                           |
| 5  | N              | I have other friends in college but they are on                          |
| 6  |                | different courses and we are not free at the same time.                  |
| 7  | R              | You seem to mix with students of any race, Muslims,                      |
| 8  |                | English. You don't just mix with Hindus?                                 |
| 9  | N              | Only me and Rajesh are Hindus in my class, so I mix                      |
| 10 |                | with everybody . . . it doesn't matter.                                  |
| 11 | R              | Is there anything else you gain from the temple?                         |
| 12 | N              | It brings good luck to see the Gods. We get <i>praśād</i> . <sup>7</sup> |
| 13 |                | It is like confession.   |
| 14 | R              | Perhaps it is the same thing I have had at a Sikh                        |
| 15 |                | temple. It is like soft food made with flour and                         |
| 16 |                | sugar.   |
| 17 | N              | We have coconut and fruits.  |
| 18 | R              | It's warm and they give it out at the end . . . when                     |
| 19 |                | you leave the temple.  |
| 20 | N              | Yes, they prepare it there in the kitchen and it                         |
| 21 |                | brings very good luck. It is nice to get <i>praśād</i> .                 |

The first interesting aspect of this exchange is that Narain gives primacy to an apparently secular reason for attending the Hindu temple - that of meeting friends (line 3).

However, if it were simply meeting friends that attracted him to the temple, then he could frequent any social environment for young people in Churchtown. The assumption must be that the common experience of being Hindu is important in this context.

Narain implies that he cannot mix with Hindu friends at college (line 6) because they have different timetables and are not free at the same time. The implication is that there would be significant contact if this were possible. His utterance (line 10) does not really negate the hypothesis that Narain seeks the company of fellow Hindus.

It seems reasonable to assume that there is something significant in the common experience of being Hindu which, if not a psychological necessity to Narain, at least is an important part of his existence.

Schutz always argued that the social world in which members of society exist is an intersubjective world, mutually-created and sustained.

The world of everyday life into which we are born is from the outset an intersubjective world. This implies on the one hand that this world is not my private one, but common to all of us; on the other hand, that within this world there exist fellow men with whom I am connected by manifold social relationships.<sup>8</sup>

The assumption must be that Narain locates this inter-subjective world primarily in the company of fellow Hindus. In this way the social world is perceived as not being an exclusively private world but one which has similar meanings and significance for others. So it is clear (line 12) that Narain exists in a world where for Hindus it is "good luck to see the Gods".



One aspect of religious activity which interests the researcher is whether any of the students generalised about the purpose or effects of the spiritual life. In some ways it was a difficult issue to raise because of the problem of formulating a question which would be understood by the student. The response to this topic was generally brief and students typically reflected for some time before giving a short answer.

- |   |                |  |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1 | Researcher (R) | This might be a difficult question, but what do you  |
| 2 |                | think is the main purpose of religion? What does     |
| 3 |                | the Hindu religion do for you?                       |
| 4 | Narain (N)     | It gives a happy life.                               |
| 5 | R              | Can you think of any other effect it has?            |
| 6 | N              | It makes you feel better . . . a happy life. (Narain |
| 7 |                | was clearly stuck for words at this point.)          |

Narain discussed the issue from his own point of view in terms of how religion made him feel. He gave no evidence of evaluating the spiritual in terms of how it helped him to relate to other people.

The researcher attempted to approach this issue in a more oblique way by discussing the Hindu gods and goddesses at the Hindu temple. The researcher showed Narain a library book containing photographs and drawings of deities.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | There is a list of names here . . . of other names              |
| 2  |                | for the Divine Mother. What about Kāli . . . is that            |
| 3  |                | another name for the Holy Mother, Mātaī?                        |
| 4  | Narain (N)     | Kāli means the black mother. We say Kālimāta . . .              |
| 5  |                | the black mother and she is very unlucky. <sup>9</sup> There is |
| 6  |                | Mātaī and she has six arms, <sup>10</sup> you know I told you;  |
| 7  |                | and there is Kālimāta and she is very unlucky.                  |
| 8  | R              | This might be a difficult question but when you have            |
| 9  |                | worshipped Mātaī and then you leave the temple do               |
| 10 |                | you behave differently for the next few days? Perhaps           |
| 11 |                | you make a special attempt to be kind to people?                |

12 N You must fast. That is the thing. You have to fast  
13 and suffer a bit like she suffered.  
14 R What do you mean exactly when you say that she suffered?  
15 N A long time ago, I don't really know when it happened  
16 but something terrible happened to each other, to  
17 Mātajī and Kālimāta, and Mātajī suffered a lot and  
18 so we must fast so that we suffer and we can under-  
19 stand. It is like Ramadan for Muslims, but we can  
20 take food and drink. They cannot have anything,  
21 but we can take fruit and have some drink.

The concept of fasting here is different to that of Hari. In the latter case the purpose appeared to be one of disciplining the personality, whereas here there is a sense of self-inflicted suffering in order to relate better to a deity, (line 12). The one similarity is the nature of the fast; that is, it is partial, and fruit and fruit juice may be consumed.

The temple appears to have considerable attraction for the students even if not solely for religious purposes. This is true of Pushpa, a confident girl, very fashionable in appearance who was interested in Art as a career. In June 1987 the researcher was able to hold a conversation with Pushpa in the staff room.

1 Researcher (R) Do you go to the temple very often then?  
2 Pushpa (P) You can go every day . . . it's open about nine-  
3 thirty weekdays and it is best to go on Sundays,  
4 but I go on Saturdays.  
5 R Why is that?  
6 P There are things on . . . events and dances . . .  
7 music.  
8 R Do you celebrate festivals like *Holi*?  
9 P Yes, *Holi*, *Divālī*<sup>1</sup> . . . in India there are fireworks  
10 at *Divālī*. There is *Navratri*<sup>1 2</sup> and we have stick  
11 dances and clap dances. It is a very nice time. In  
12 Leicester and Wembley they get permission to put up  
13 street lights during *Divālī*.  
14 R I know many Hindu families have a shrine at home.

15		Do you have one?
16	P	Yes (nodding).
17	R	Do you have statues or photos?
18	P	There are photos of Gods. (Pushpa seemed reluctant to
19		add to this.)
20	R	Do you pray at the shrine or fast sometimes?
21	P	Pray yes. We only fast for a special occasion like
22		Kṛṣṇa's birthday.

Pushpa's interest in the temple appears to focus particularly upon the festivals and social occasions. When asked for rather more detail about her interest or knowledge of religious matters (line 18) she is reluctant to expand further.

The opening exchanges in this dialogue are illustrative of Garfinkel's contention that social interaction is very often non-rational,<sup>13</sup> and further that an attempt to solely employ scientific rationalities in conversation renders the exchange problematic. On being asked whether she visits the temple very often, Pushpa responds in an evasive manner or perhaps she feels that the information she provides is that which the researcher wants. The interesting phrase (line 3) is that "it is best to go on Sundays, but I go on Saturdays". She explains that she goes on Saturdays because of the social events. So why does she say it is "best" to go on Sundays? The researcher understands this word as signifying that most of the religious ceremonies are on that day and therefore Pushpa is suggesting that the researcher might find it more interesting to attend on Sundays. Nothing Pushpa says later in the dialogue contradicts this interpretation and such a meaning is entirely consistent with the general dialogue. Although "best" is a non-rational expression in the sense that it does not provide reasons, the implied meaning is sufficient to enable the conversation to proceed. As Garfinkel wrote:

... scientific rationalities are neither properties nor sanctionable ideals of choices exercised within the affairs governed by the presuppositions of everyday life.<sup>14</sup>

Mohan was a friend of Rajesh and was also following a course in Engineering. Mohan also had a similar personality to Rajesh in that he was fairly quiet and retiring.

Notwithstanding this Mohan was always very helpful to the researcher in terms of discussing his cultural background. In the following extract recorded from a conversation in June 1987, Mohan discusses fasting among other topics.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | I know some Hindu students fast . . . sometimes I            |
| 2  |                | think to help them with their studies or other things        |
| 3  |                | like that.   |
| 4  | Mohan (M)      | Oh yes, I fast six days in the year. No meat or fish,        |
| 5  |                | just vegetables and fruit juice.                             |
| 6  | R              | Is that the same day all the time?                           |
| 7  | M              | Saturday . . . always Saturday.                              |
| 8  | R              | One thing I've never understood quite is who decides         |
| 9  |                | you must fast and in particular who decides which            |
| 10 |                | day. Is it the priest?                                       |
| 11 | M              | I'm not really . . . sure. My father he fasts on             |
| 12 |                | Saturdays and Thursdays. He told me to fast on               |
| 13 |                | Saturday the same as him . . . but I do not know who         |
| 14 |                | told him.  |
| 15 | R              | Have you ever had lessons in religion at the temple          |
| 16 |                | or anything like that?                                       |
| 17 | M              | Two years ago I started but it was very difficult.           |
| 18 |                | I was older and it was difficult to learn.                   |
| 19 | R              | Was this about the scriptures?                               |
| 20 | M              | No, just the language.                                       |
| 21 | R              | Did you learn the alphabet then . . . the letters?           |
| 22 | M              | I learned the letters but I never learned to write           |
| 23 |                | much . . . but I speak Gujarāṭi very well . . . I            |
| 24 |                | always speak with my parents.                                |
| 25 | R              | Have you ever heard of the <i>Bhagavad Gītā</i> for example? |
| 26 | M              | Heard of it. I've never read it because I can't read         |
| 27 |                | the language.  |



The notion of fasting here, seems to be closest to that of Hari although there is no direct evidence of the purpose of the fast, other than to comply with his father's custom.

Although Mohan says his father "told" him to fast on Saturday (line 12), this is not interpreted as being the action of an authoritarian parent but of a parent giving his son religious advice.

It is interesting that Mohan interprets "lessons in religion" (line 15) as being the same as lessons in written Gujarāṭi (line 20). Later in the conversation (line 23) he verifies that he speaks the language proficiently. There is evidence here that Mohan identifies the written Gujarāṭi with a religious function and spoken Gujarāṭi with a social one. It does not seem to occur to him (line 26) that translation of scriptures is possible, or perhaps it is simply offered as a ready excuse because in fact he has not the intrinsic interest to attempt to understand the scriptural texts.

Purshottham started the course in September 1987, the year following Mohan, but he had already completed one year at the college, repeating his GCE 'O' levels. He had failed these for the second time and had come to see the researcher with his closest friend, a Muslim boy, who had exactly the same academic record. The researcher was reluctant to admit them to the CPVE course as there was little evidence from internal college reports that either student was particularly well-motivated. However, both students were eventually enrolled and initial reservations proved groundless because they attended well and made good progress. The Muslim student left the course prematurely as he obtained a job, but Purshottham continued and eventually obtained a place on the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies for the following academic year.

He was always very fashionably dressed and habitually wore a short, tailored, black leather jacket, white shirt and dark tie. His hair was in curls and very long at the back,

and he wore a single, gold ear-ring. For most of his college career he had a regular girlfriend who was a Business Studies student. Purshottham was always very sociable but did not appear to particularly seek out other Hindu students. He mixed mainly with Muslim and English students. After he had left the CPVE course he always said "Hello" to the researcher whenever they passed in the college. He never failed to do this, however crowded the corridor or however difficult it was to speak.

In this first conversation from October 1987 Purshottham discusses his views of the Hindu temple.

- 1 Researcher (R) Do you go down much to the Hindu temple? I have been
- 2 there . . . I know it reasonably well.
- 3 Purshottham (Pu) Yes I go there . . . I go there to pray sometimes.
- 4 R Do you go there for social events too, or just
- 5 for religious functions?
- 6 Pu There are weddings there . . . and I go to those.
- 7 Other things too. So when you first get there you
- 8 go in to pray. There are statues of all the Gods
- 9 there and you go round to each one and pray like.
- 10 R Kṛṣṇa? There is a statue of Kṛṣṇa?
- 11 Pu Kṛṣṇa and other Gods. There is Hanuman . . . do you
- 12 know that?
- 13 R The monkey God?
- 14 Pu Monkey God . . . that's right (smiling broadly - he
- 15 appears pleased that the researcher seems to know
- 16 something about the Hindu Gods). And other Gods.
- 17 Lakshmi . . . she is money . . . means wealth.
- 18 R Ganesh?
- 19 Pu Ganesh yes. I don't know who is the most important.
- 20 Well Kṛṣṇa is the most important but after him I
- 21 don't know. Lakshmi I think. She might be the senior
- 22 God. You can see all the Gods at the Prospect<sup>15\*</sup>
- 23 each year. Did you go last year?
- 24 R No, what's that?
- 25 Pu There are Hindu celebrations for a week each year
- 26 at the Prospect\* and we take all the Gods there. They
- 27 are in a circle in the centre and in the centre

28                               is a small lamp, and you warm your hands on it.  
 29                               That is *artī*.<sup>16</sup>  
 30     R                         And then smooth your forehead?  
 31     Pu                      That's it! (smiling again, because the researcher  
 32                               appears familiar with the ceremony).

In his very first response (line 3) Purshottham is willing to immediately start talking about religious matters. This is probably because he felt he knew the researcher reasonably well and also because he is naturally self-confident. On two occasions (lines 14 and 31) Purshottham smiles broadly when the researcher demonstrates some knowledge of Hinduism. The researcher interprets this smile as evidence of Purshottham's pleasure at talking to a non-Asian adult who knows something of his culture. The researcher also assumes that it gives Purshottham confidence in the discussion - confidence that what he says will be understood. Moreover, the researcher actively seeks opportunities to demonstrate some knowledge of Hindu culture in the hope that this will encourage respondents to talk more.

Of course, Purshottham may have been smiling for completely different reasons, but as Schutz pointed out, social interaction is a process of continuous interpretation and reinterpretation. The meaning of an individual's facial expressions, and behaviour patterns and utterances, is interpreted by other social members in a way which gives meaning to the interaction.

... the fellow man's self can merely be grasped by a "contribution of imagination of hypothetical meaning presentation" that is, by forming a construct of a typical way of behaviour, a typical pattern of underlying motives, of typical attitudes of a personality type, of which the Other and his conduct under scrutiny, both of my observational reach, are just instances or examples.<sup>17</sup>

The explanation already given for the smiling appears to the researcher to be the most plausible interpretation.

In another conversation a few days later, Purshottham described the use of the shrine at home:

- |    |                  |   |
|----|------------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R)   | Are there ceremonies at home which you follow?      |
| 2  | Purshottham (Pu) | I have a bath every morning and in the bathroom     |
| 3  |                  | there is a cabinet like . . . a small cabinet . . . |
| 4  |                  | and the Gods are on it. There + + +                 |
| 5  | R                | Can I? . . . are these statues . . . small statues? |
| 6  | Pu               | Just photographs . . . you know what I mean.        |
| 7  |                  | Kṛṣṇa and some others. After my bath I dip some     |
| 8  |                  | cotton wool in like oil + + +                       |
| 9  | R                | Ghee?   |
| 10 | Pu               | Ghee yes . . . and light it. Then I say my prayers. |
| 11 |                  | I do it like this every day.                        |

This short extract suggests two important facets of Purshottham's life. Firstly, the phrase "you know what I mean" (line 6) indicates that he assumes a reciprocity of perspectives between himself and the researcher. He does not wish to say, "you know what I mean by photographs". Rather, he is affirming his confidence in the researcher's working knowledge of the type of ritual photographs normally employed for household shrines. This is reassuring for the researcher in that it tends to suggest that the policy of making it clear to students that he has a sense of the cultural worth of Hinduism is succeeding.

Secondly, it is interesting to note the extent of the regular formal religious practice of an apparently Westernised student.

A contemporary of Purshottham also mentioned the use of a shrine in the home. Ratilal was a very quiet young man, in many ways the opposite to Purshottham in terms of personality and sense of dress, yet once he gained confidence he was a very interesting



conversationalist. The following extract is from the first discussion with Ratilal, which was held in a room adjoining the college library in September 1987.

- 1 Researcher (R) Do you go to the temple much?
- 2 Ratilal (Ral) Not a lot. We have like a shrine in the house and
- 3 we can say our prayers there.
- 4 R Do they ever run classes in religious education at
- 5 the temple?
- 6 Ral No . . . see most of it is done at home by parents.
- 7 We have like a small temple at home.
- 8 R A shrine?
- 9 Ral Yes, and my parents tell me about religion. My father
- 10 gets some books in English and teaches my brother
- 11 and sister and myself. He teaches me prayers . . .
- 12 like we have this prayer to say on Saturdays which is
- 13 very good for you . . . it is called the *Hanuman*
- 14 *Chalisa*<sup>18</sup> and also I fast on Saturdays and that helps
- 15 me think of God.
- 16 R That's very interesting . . . so it is centred on
- 17 the home.
- 18 Ral And I was also joining like a Sunday School group.
- 19 They are called Balvikas and they are all over the
- 20 country. They teach us prayers and things like that.
- 21 R Are they attached to the temple?
- 22 Ral No. You meet at your teacher's home on like Saturday
- 23 mornings for one hour or two hours and they teach
- 24 you about religion. The teachers are ordinary people
- 25 right. My teacher she was doing a degree in accounting
- 26 but she knew about God.
- 27 R Did she teach you *mantras*? Did you learn anything
- 28 like the *Gāyatrī mantra*?
- 29 Ral Yes I learned that in Sanskrit from her. Now I say it.
- 30 But the Churchtown Balvikas group closed up because
- 31 not many people went.
- 32 R What about other scriptures? Have you heard of the
- 33 *Bhagavad Gītā*?
- 34 Ral Yes I have heard of it, but I cannot get it in English.

In some ways it seems unusual that English is perceived as the most appropriate language for tuition in religious matters. Twice in this extract Ratilal hints at this. He mentions that his father "gets some books in English" (line 10) and in his last utterance he is clearly relying upon receiving a copy of the *Bhagavad Gītā* in English. Ratilal was undertaking lessons in written Gujarāṭi at the Hindu temple, yet had only managed to master the alphabet. As he could not read or understand Sanskrit he thus had to rely upon translations of Hindu scriptures into English.

It is also interesting that there does not seem to be systematic religious education available at the Hindu temple. Parents or informal home classes are seen as the main medium for religious education. There is an obvious contrast here with the situation in Islam.

Ratilal gives an interesting example of an indexical expression when he describes the type of person who teaches at the "Sunday School classes". He describes such people as "ordinary" (line 24). This expression is 'indexical' because it is equivocal. As Bar-Hillel said, such an expression is only understood in terms of the "pragmatic context"<sup>19</sup> in which it is used. The word "ordinary" does not signify 'plain', or 'common', or 'untutored', but is used in this context to signify that the teachers are not profound religious mystics or monks or nuns, but simply people doing an everyday job and who have an affiliation for the religious life. This is known because of the following sentence which provides the context. It is also interesting that the teacher is female, providing an insight into the status of women spiritual teachers in Hinduism and also a contrast with the situation in Islam.

A contemporary of Ratilal was Ramila. She was a very confident girl, studying Business Studies. She dressed in western style clothes and although she had many friends in college, she always displayed a fairly serious demeanour. Ramila always gave the impression that she knew what she wanted to achieve in life and would work hard to get

there. During a social studies class in June 1988, the researcher encouraged students to talk about their religion. Ramila was the only Hindu in the class, which consisted mainly of Muslim boys. Although the researcher emphasised that she need not say anything, she actually insisted on coming to the front of the class and giving a short talk. In the following transcript there are some questions by a Muslim boy called Faruk who tried to disrupt Ramila's talk. Ramila proved quite capable of handling the situation.

1	Ramila (Rm)	In Hinduism there are . . . according to my exper-
2		ience . . . there are more than one God. There are
3		Shiva and Rāmā + + +
4	Faruk	How many then are there? (said sarcastically).
5	Rm	I don't know the exact number. Sir! Sir! (meaning that
6		she feels she is being interrupted by silly questions)
7		You can't name all of them 'cos I don't know the
8		exact number. There are so many no-one knows how
9		many. It's like that in Hinduism.
10	Faruk	Who's the monkey God?
11	Rm	Thingy . . . stop it! Shut up. Sir! Pokin' fun at me!
12		Sir!
13	Researcher (R)	Stop it Faruk. You've listened to a talk on Islam.
14		Let Ramila finish her talk.
15	Faruk	I want to ask Sir . . . serious . . . are you allowed
16		to handle beef?
17	Rm	Yeh . . . we can handle beef. I don't eat it. We
18		don't eat beef. I never really thought about it. It
19		gives you nutrition and things but I don't eat the
20		beef and beef products like beefburgers. I don't like
21		them but I can cook them.
22	Faruk	What's the charm you have? (Ramila wore a reverse
23		swastika on a chain around her neck.)
24	Rm	Well it's not a Nazi sign, I can tell you that. It
25		goes the other way round and it's not at all a Nazi
26		sign.
27	R	Ramila, can you say something about the life of girls
28		and equality and things like that.
29	Rm	Hinduism is a very . . . like open religion. Like
30		in night-clubs and things it is mostly Hindu girls ...
31		Muslim girls don't go there. At temple when we play



32 badminton and things . . . Muslim girls don't do  
 33 things like that right . . . there + + +  
 34 and we have castes . . . four main categories . . .  
 35 and they do different things. Like I'm in the farmer  
 36 caste and you have to . . . well not really have to  
 37 . . . but you can marry in your caste but I won't do,  
 38 'cos I'll choose who I want to marry . . .  
 39 Won't be you ya git! Sir! (in response to an inaudible  
 40 but apparently aggravating comment.)  
 41 R Carry on, Ramila.  
 42 Rm You have fasting . . . there's only fruit and milk ...  
 43 and there's fasting . . . like two days for this  
 44 God and another two days for that God. So we fast  
 45 and it's good . . . it helps you think of God and  
 46 then you can be better. It's good.

During the talk which she gave Ramila demonstrated considerable confidence and indeed pugnacity. Her talk lasted about fifteen minutes but during that time the Muslim boys in the class were quite disruptive making barely-audible comments and grinning at each other. Most of them were attempting to ridicule Hinduism rather than disrupt Ramila, who they regarded in many ways as an equal because of her ability to respond in a robust manner to anything they said. The researcher had to stop the proceedings on several occasions to reprimand the boys for their attitude.

As is very often with students giving a talk in class, Ramila tended to direct her talk to the researcher and therefore it appears that it is sometimes for his attention alone.

In her second utterance (line 9) Ramila makes an interesting comment which may well have been intended for the researcher, as it embodies a complex idea. She has just made a specific statement - that no-one knows how many Gods there are in Hinduism, because there are so many. Presumably this is factually incorrect, since it is a reasonable assumption that there is a finite number of commonly-accepted deities. However, when



she says "It's like that in Hinduism", the researcher interprets this as a statement that in Hinduism it is common to have uncertainties. Ramila appears to be asserting the rather sophisticated notion that Hinduism is a religion of relativities rather than absolutes. Later in the extract (line 29) she repeats the concept in a different form when she says Hinduism is an "open religion".

Ramila, rather like Niru, was very westernised. She went to nightclubs and appeared to lead a full social life. Nevertheless, like other students, she draws attention to fasting and to its purpose of bringing God into the mind of the individual. Ramila says (line 46) that you "can be better". The researcher interpreted this remark, not in the context of strict morality, but of perhaps leading a more purposeful, meaningful life.

As mentioned previously several of the students in the sample belonged to the Swaminārāyan sect. In a conversation in May 1987, Narain, who attended the mainstream Hindu temple, had provided some information about the group. The Swaminarayans had been mentioned in a book which the researcher had shown to Narain and he had commented:

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Narain (N)     | No, they are different people. They have their own    |
| 2  |                | temple and they don't come down to our place. They    |
| 3  |                | have this mark like on their foreheads.               |
| 4  | Researcher (R) | What is that like?                                    |
| 5  | N              | It's like a U with a mark in the middle. They make    |
| 6  |                | it in red, when they do it, but they don't do it much |
| 7  |                | round the college or anything.                        |
| 8  | R              | Will both men and women have the mark?                |
| 9  | N              | They can both have.                                   |
| 10 | R              | Do they worship in a different way? What do they      |
| 11 |                | believe in?   |
| 12 | N              | They only worship Kṛṣṇa like . . . that is the diff-  |
| 13 |                | erence. We worship Kṛṣṇa and all the different saints |
| 14 |                | as well. We worship one God really, but all the       |
| 15 |                | saints, and they just worship Kṛṣṇa. And they         |

16                                worship Swaminārāyan . . . he is this man . . . so  
17                                they worship a man; he is their leader. He is in  
18                                India somewhere and they worship him.

Narain makes it quite clear in this extract (line 1) that he views the Swaminārāyans as an entirely separate group. He describes them as "different people". This is quite a forceful way of making a distinction. He does not say that they are 'a bit different', or they are 'slightly different', yet he possessed the linguistic sophistication to use a phrase like that if it seemed appropriate. One can only conclude that Narain perceived the Swaminārāyans as being a clearly distinct sect and that there was a clear demarcation line between them and mainstream Hindus.

In the last utterance Narain also provides a reasonably precise summary of the differences between mainstream Hinduism and the Swaminārāyan sect. He is correct in that the latter gives less emphasis to a multiplicity of deities and also emphasises the role of a human preceptor.

Both Subhash and Balwant were Swaminārāyan Hindus. Neither wore the *tilak* mark and the researcher's original knowledge of their belonging to the sect came from talking to Shanti. Both students were in the same CPVE Business Studies group, and although they were friends they did not spend a great deal of time in each others company. Subhash was an outgoing individual and had several close friends, whereas Balwant tended to be somewhat reclusive and of a nervous disposition. They both shared, however, a fairly serious approach to life and to their college course. The following is part of a conversation with Subhash held in the library in November 1987.

1    Researcher (R)        I hadn't realised you were a Swaminārāyan Subhash.  
2                                Is that what you say . . . a Swaminārāyan?  
3    Subhash (S)            Yes, Swaminārāyan.

4 R You go to the temple?

5 S Yes Sir.

6 R You don't have the mark on the forehead though?

7 S No, it's not compulsory. I have these. (He drew from

8 inside his shirt neck a short necklace of beads.

9 They were threaded on yellow cotton and near the

10 front the single thread of cotton was divided into

11 two, each strand with very tiny beads.)

12 R Ah, yes.

13 S This is called *kanthī*. You get these when you become

14 a Swaminārāyan.

15 R Do you use them for praying?

16 S Yes, we say the name of God.

17 R Do you do this each day?

18 S Well, I say Swaminārāyan whenever I have time. Lots

19 of times.

20 R Are there one hundred and eight beads? How many are

21 there?

22 S I don't know . . . might be a hundred an' eight . . .

23 yes, it will be because we say the name of God one

24 hundred and eight times at the temple. We have bigger

25 ones there.

26 R There are bigger strands of beads?

27 S Yes, at temple.

28 R Are they hanging on the wall?

29 S No, in a basket.

30 R And you just get one when you go to the temple?

31 S Yes.

It is clear from this extract that Subhash is involved in the religious life. When the researcher asks him (line 15) whether he uses the beads as an aid in praying, Subhash interprets this as a perfectly normal question and one which it is quite appropriate to put to him. Subhash replies by indicating that he uses the beads to "say the name of God". He does not at first expand upon this indicating that he presumes some understanding on the part of the researcher. It is clear (lines 18 and 23) that he is using the name of Swaminārāyan as a form of *mantram* and repeating this regularly as a spiritual exercise.

The beads help in counting the number of times the *mantram* has been uttered, and also as an aid in concentration.

As before, the researcher was interested in exploring any ways in which religious belief might affect attitudes to life. Subhash made a reasonable attempt at handling this issue:

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | I am very interested in how your religion might      |
| 2  |                | affect your everyday life. Whether it causes you to  |
| 3  |                | behave in a certain way. I know it emphasises good   |
| 4  |                | deeds. How are you told to behave at the temple?     |
| 5  | Subhash (S)    | We must behave ourselves - like adults.              |
| 6  | R              | Who tells you? The priest?                           |
| 7  | S              | No priest . . . just grown-ups. They say we must     |
| 8  |                | not mess around.                                     |
| 9  | R              | Have you been told off?                              |
| 10 | S              | Just once. We were running around with younger boys. |
| 11 |                | We must behave.                                      |
| 12 | R              | So you are encouraged to behave sensibly?            |
| 13 | S              | Yes.   |

It appears from this extract that the social context of the temple is used to sustain behaviour norms. Subhash does not suggest that these social norms are justified by an appeal to some kind of religious truth. Rather, it seems as if parents at the Swaminārāyan temple try to instil a relatively sober style of behaviour in the context of religious practice.

In the college timetable, Wednesday afternoons are generally free for most full-time students so that they can participate in sports and recreation activities. Balwant, however, was normally to be found in the computer building working on mathematics projects. The following conversation took place in January 1988 in an otherwise empty computer room.



1	Researcher (R)	How's your maths going Balwant? Are you still going
2		to evening classes?
3	Balwant (B)	Yes Sir, but I've missed a couple of weeks . . . the
4		last two weeks. I am helping my mother get ready
5		for my sister's wedding.
6	R	That's interesting. When is she getting married?
7	B	Saturday. I have to be away Thursday and Friday to
8		do things.
9	R	Oh that's all right. Have you got a role in the
10		ceremony then?
11	B	Sort of. (smiling).
12	R	What do you do?
13	B	Put the rice in her hand. Then walk around the fire
14		with her. You go round seven times. Put on all the
15		yellow dye on her face. She is all yellow to go.
16	R	Do you help say prayers?
17	B	Yes, say prayers.
18	R	What sort of preparation are you doing? How are you
19		helping your Mum?
20	B	Fetching food . . . that mainly.
21	R	Is it at the Swaminārāyan temple?
22	B	No, other temple.
23	R	Why is that?
24	B	Bigger place.

Balwant's second utterance (line 7) illustrates the importance attached to major socio-religious events. Normally, Balwant would never have been absent from college. Yet, in this utterance he not only gives prior notice of a two-day absence, but simply declares that absence rather than asking permission. This is probably, however, a further example of an utterance which is reflexively related to the perceived attitudes of the researcher. Balwant clearly feels that he is able to make this utterance and that the necessity for the absence will be fully understood by the researcher.

In his response, perhaps the researcher does not react as a normal course tutor. Tutors are usually reluctant to create precedents for absence as these are frequently cited by

other students at a later date when they also wish to be absent. Here the researcher is more tolerant, taking into account the obvious importance to Balwant of the event.

About one week later the researcher spoke to Balwant at the end of a class.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | How did the wedding go. Was it last Saturday?       |
| 2  | Balwant (B)    | Went very well. (smiling).                          |
| 3  | R              | Did you have a lot to do?                           |
| 4  | B              | Yes, I had to look after my sister . . . put things |
| 5  |                | in her hand and be beside her at the fire.          |
| 6  | R              | Do you walk round the fire with her?                |
| 7  | B              | No, that is the husband.                            |
| 8  | R              | I suppose it lasted all day.                        |
| 9  | B              | Yes, it finished at six-thirty.                     |
| 10 | R              | When did it start?                                  |
| 11 | B              | Eight o'clock.                                      |
| 12 | R              | So it was a very big affair?                        |
| 13 | B              | A little bit sad really.                            |
| 14 | R              | Why is that?  |
| 15 | B              | My sister is leaving home.                          |

Balwant gives an indication (line 13) of how he makes sense of the social event of the wedding. The method he employs as a social member is to answer the question he wants to answer rather than the one he was asked. The previous question by the researcher was as much an observation as a question, but Balwant used it as an opportunity to interpret the wedding from his own perspective. He appeared to view it as fundamentally a sad occasion. Although he says it was only "a little bit sad", the fact that after a week he chooses to focus upon this dimension, implies that he is still reflecting upon the event with a certain melancholy. It also indicates something of the strength of the bonds linking members of a Hindu family.

Shanti was in the same year group as Balwant and Subhash, and although he provided the researcher with a great deal of information about the Swaminārāyan sect, he tended to be rather slow and ponderous in conversation and needed a good deal of prompting. There was always the danger here that the researcher was providing too much stimulus material and having too great an impact upon the responses. The following conversation took place in October 1987 in a study room in the library.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | I'm very interested in the Hindu religion. I read         |
| 2  |                | books on Hinduism. Have you ever read the <i>Bhagavad</i> |
| 3  |                | <i>Gītā</i> ?   |
| 4  | Shanti (Sh)    | (Slight look of puzzlement - says nothing).               |
| 5  | R              | Have you heard of it? (Smiling in an encouraging          |
| 6  |                | manner).  |
| 7  | Sh             | Heard of it. (Said with a cautious attitude - still       |
| 8  |                | looking puzzled).   |
| 9  | R              | Do you know what it's about?                              |
| 10 | Sh             | Krsna.  |
| 11 | R              | That's right. It's about Kṛṣṇa.                           |

This apparent reluctance to talk appeared to the researcher to be partly because of communication difficulties and problems with English, and also because of a naive and simplistic awareness of his religion. Although Shanti took his faith very seriously, his knowledge of his religion appeared rather limited and superficial.

There is some evidence of this in the following conversation. Shanti had loaned the researcher some publicity leaflets on the Swaminārāyan religion, and the researcher was able to use the photographs in the leaflets as prompt material. The researcher started by looking at photographs of Swaminārāyan monks. The conversation took place in November 1987.

1	Researcher (R)	Who are these people? Are they monks?
2	Shanti (Sh)	Saints. They are saints.
3	R	You call them saints?
4	Sh	Yes.
5	R	How do you become a saint?
6	Sh	You must study. Then you become very holy.
7	R	How old must you be?
8	Sh	Eighteen. (said tentatively).
9	R	And how else must you behave if you are a saint?
10	Sh	(No response - Shanti appears to be in deep thought).
11	R	You must be vegetarian?
12	Sh	Vegetarian, yes.
13	R	Are all Swaminārāyans vegetarian?
14	Sh	Yes.
15	R	How do the saints spend their time? What do they do?
16	Sh	Pray.
17	R	Meditate?
18	Sh	Meditate, yes. Study.
19	R	Would you like to be a saint?
20	Sh	I might be (in deep thought).

There are clear inconsistencies here in Shanti's interpretation of his religion. The notion (line 6) that study leads to holiness is a rather simplistic idea and later (line 10) Shanti appears to have no idea of the general functions and duties of a Swaminārāyan renunciate. On the other hand, it is perhaps expecting too much that an average sixteen year old would gain more than a superficial understanding of religious practices and concepts. Nevertheless, Shanti provided an enormous quantity of interesting data giving insights into the religious perceptions of a Hindu teenager.

1	Researcher (R)	I have heard of Swaminārāyan. Who is it actually
2		that you follow?
3	Shanti (Sh)	Swaminārāyan. He is in another man.
4	R	I thought Swaminārāyan was dead. Is that right?
5	Sh	He is dead. He is dead, but he is in another man.
6	R	Ah, his spirit is in another man. I understand.
7		Is this man in India?



8 Sh Yes.

9 R Does he live in Bombay? I'm just guessing. (Smiling)

10 Sh Bombay, yes.

11 R So Swaminārāyan is actually dead, but he has passed

12 on his spirit to another teacher who lives in Bombay,

13 and this is the teacher who you follow. Is that right?

14 Sh That's right.

15 R Can I ask you what this man's name is, in Bombay?

16 Sh Pramukh.

17 R Pramukh.

18 Sh Pramukhswāmī.

19 R Pramukhswāmī. I've been interested in this red mark

20 you have on your forehead. Do you mind my asking

21 about it?

22 Sh (Shanti showed no real response - only a slight smile)

23 R I know you always wear it. What exactly is it for?

24 Sh (Shanti appears to struggle for an explanation).

25 R Is it for a kind of respect?

26 Sh Respect yes . . . for the teacher.

27 R What is the mark called?

28 Sh Tilak.

29 R It obviously matters to you to wear this mark. I

30 think it's quite brave of you really, because other

31 students must mention it sometimes . . . do they?

32 Sh They take the mickey, but I don't really mind.

33 R Well that's very good that you don't get worried

34 about it. Do they joke about it then? Students on

35 CPVE.

36 Sh At first. Now they are used to it. At school they

37 were used to it.

The major difficulty with talking to Shanti was the danger of interpreting his remarks for him, and thus constructing a social world which was not really his. For example (line 6), the researcher construes "he is in another man" as 'his spirit is in another man'. The researcher attempts to verify and consolidate this interpretation a few lines later (line 12) but there can be no certainty either that by then his interpretation has not become firmly

established in Shanti's mind or that for Shanti it is simply easier to agree with this interpretation.

Naturally, "he is in another man" is open to multiple interpretations, mostly centring on what aspect of Swaminārāyan is now part of the human being Pramukhswāmī. If Shanti had any specific conceptualisations of this, there is not really the evidence that he would have been able to express them.

Shanti was unique in the sample in wearing the *tilak* and he says (line 32) that he does not "really mind" when fellow students "take the mickey". The fact that Shanti sustains the wearing of the *tilak* when he is subject to some comments about it, demonstrates considerable devotion to his faith. However, when he says he doesn't mind the comments, he may not be reflecting his true feelings, attempting either to appear resilient in the eyes of the lecturer, or perhaps trying to overcome quite natural feelings of shyness about the matter.

The only other Swaminārāyan student in the sample was Rajendra. He started the CPVE programme in September 1988 and elected to follow the Mechanical Engineering option. The researcher was aware that he was a member of the Swaminārāyan tradition because of what Shanti had said. Rajendra was quiet and restrained, and somewhat like Shanti he needed prompting and persuading to talk. It is interesting to contrast Rajendra's description of the Swaminārāyan monks with that of Shanti. The conversation was recorded in March 1989.

- |   |                |  |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1 | Researcher (R) | Have there ever been any Swaminārāyan monks come       |
| 2 |                | to the temple?   |
| 3 | Rajendra (Rd)  | Yes, <i>sādhus</i> .                                   |
| 4 | R              | <i>Sādhus</i> , sorry, <i>sādhus</i> . Have they been? |
| 5 | Rd             | Yeh, they've been.                                     |
| 6 | R              | I'd quite like to talk to some of them. Are they       |
| 7 |                | Indians?   |

8	Rd	Yeh, they come from India.
9	R	They're not Europeans living in India?
10	Rd	No, they're Indians.
11	R	Do they speak English?
12	Rd	Yes, they speak English.
13	R	When do they come . . . in the summer months?
14	Rd	yes, they are going to America now.

Neither Shanti's "saint" nor Rajendra's "*sādhū*" seem quite the appropriate term to describe the Swaminārāyan monks. A "saint" in India, is normally an individual living an independent life who attracts adherents because of his or her particular spiritual qualities. A *sādhū*, in the Hindu tradition, is an itinerant holy person, who normally belongs to a religious order but who also tends to lead a solitary existence, except for special religious events. The Swaminārāyan monks, however, are usually based in a monastery where there is an established corporate life, although they may be asked to travel in pairs or small groups when they are teaching. The term 'monk' or 'renunciate' seems more appropriate.

The researcher was interested in discussing ways in which Rajendra felt affected by his religion. The researcher always prefaced this issue with a fairly elaborate question, which in this case was not very successful in eliciting a response.

1	Researcher (R)	Right . . . one thing that interests me is the effect
2		which your religion may have on you . . . because
3		everyone who has a religion tends to be affected
4		by that religion. It has some effect upon them. My
5		religion has an effect upon me, for example. How does
6		your religion affect you? How does it affect your
7		attitudes to things for example? Do you try and follow
8		the teachings in your everyday life? What sort of
9		person do the teachings make you?
10	Rajendra (Rd)	(No response).
11	R	Well, there are things like you probably don't eat

12		meat.
13	Rd	No.
14	R	Well, there are things like that. I don't suppose
15		you drink alcohol do you?
16	Rd	No.
17	R	So what else is there?
18	Rd	Well you don't look at girls. You don't touch girls.
19	R	Well, obviously you talk to them, but you don't mix
20		with them very much.
21	Rd	No. Not to tell lies.

The lack of response to the researcher's first question tends to indicate that Rajendra does not reflect upon the effects of the spiritual life upon the individual. It appears that he accepts the social norms of the religious group, but in a fairly non-analytical way.

The issue about not looking at girls (line 18) appears to be fairly well-generalised throughout the sample of Swaminārāyan students, as they all were fairly retiring in dealings with the opposite sex. In fact, the researcher cannot recollect seeing any of the Swaminārāyan students in informal conversation with girls around the college. Talk with girls would be restricted to formalised exchanges during class. This was certainly not true of the non-Swaminārāyan Hindu boys.

The rather formal side of the Swaminārāyan members was revealed when the researcher asked Rajendra about the consequences of wrong-doing.

1	Researcher (R)	What does God do if you do something wrong?
2	Rajendra (Rd)	He puts it in his big diary. Then he remembers
3		to punish you.
4	R	What effect does that have? What does God do then
5		really?
6	Rd	Well, when we die we go up to Him and He tells us
7		what we've done, and if we've done bad things there
8		are like two beasts beside him.



9 R Two beasts?  
 10 Rd Yeh, two beasts, and they take a rope and tie us and  
 11 take us to hell.  
 12 R What sort of beasts are these?  
 13 Rd Tigers. Lions.  
 14 R Right. OK Right. So they take you somewhere that's  
 15 pretty nasty do they? Where do they take you?  
 16 Rd They take you to narakh.  
 17 R What's narakh? N, A, R, A, K, H. Is that right?  
 18 Rd Yes. It's a very evil place.  
 19 R So how long do you spend there?  
 20 Rd A long time.  
 21 R Right. Are you ever reborn? Are you taught rebirth?  
 22 Rd Yes, there is.  
 23 R So, if you go to narakh are you reborn in a very low  
 24 caste . . . like a little animal or something?  
 25 Rd Yes.  
 26 R Can you be reborn as a human being.  
 27 Rd Yes.

While Rajendra was recounting the form which retribution takes he appeared completely serious, and in no sense did he indicate that he believed any of what he said did not represent reality. The possibility exists that this account is provided for the benefit of younger people and a more sophisticated version of the principles of *karma* is outlined as teenagers mature. It is certainly a fairly strict and fearsome system of retribution and it is difficult to assess the influence which such an image may have on young minds.

The series of questions on rebirth (line 21) are all answered in the affirmative and it may be that Rajendra was merely taking a lead from the line of questioning.

A few weeks later when the researcher was able to talk to Rajendra again, it transpired that he had spent most of the previous summer holiday living at the Swaminārāyan temple in London and talking with monks and other religious teachers. Then, without any warning he declared:

1 Rajendra (Rd) I'm going to be a *sādhū*.  
2 Researcher (R) Really! A *sādhū*. When is that?  
3 Rd Nineteen ninety-two.  
4 R Nineteen ninety-two - that's incredible . . . and  
5 that'll be a permanent thing won't it?  
6 Rd I'll live with Pramukhswāmī.  
7 R And which town is that? Where does he live?  
8 Rd Ahmedabad.  
9 R Ahmedabad, yeh. So you'd become a *sādhū* . . . and  
10 you'd train as a *sādhū*. That's incredible.  
11 Rd I met Pramukhswāmī in London and he said I could come  
12 and live at the temple in Ahmedabad and be a *sādhū*.  
13 R Why nineteen ninety-two? Is it because of your age?  
14 You'll be eighteen or nineteen then?  
15 Rd Yes . . . nineteen to be a *sādhū*.  
16 R Well, I wish you the best of luck. I wish you the  
17 best of luck. Your parents want you to go?  
18 Rd Yeh.

Rajendra did not declare he was going to train as a *sādhū*, or monk, until the very end of the conversation. The researcher had held several earlier conversations and it therefore seemed as if Rajendra was unsure whether to reveal the fact that he intended to become a *sādhū*. There are many possible explanations as to his withholding this information until later in the conversations, including the obvious possibility that if students learned of his intention, he might be subject to some ridicule.

It is noticeable that Rajendra (line 6) reveals the information he wants to reveal rather than what he is asked. The previous question "and that'll be a permanent thing won't it" is in many ways a general, open-ended question which invites a range of possible responses. Rajendra chooses to focus upon Pramukhswāmī and it seems reasonable to suppose that when he met the teacher in London, Rajendra was very influenced by him and presumably would feel a good deal of affection and respect, as is normal in the relationship between disciple and guru.

Satya did not have the advantage of a thriving temple to attend. As a Telugu speaker he could not communicate with the Gujarāṭi speakers at either of the other temples, except in English. In a conversation from November 1988, he explained where he attended.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Is there a temple here for Telugu speakers?         |
| 2  | Satya (Sty)    | Not temple. It is like house and we meet there      |
| 3  |                | do pūjā on Sundays.                                 |
| 4  | R              | Is there a priest?                                  |
| 5  | Sty            | No priest.  |
| 6  | R              | What about weddings? Could you have weddings there? |
| 7  | Sty            | You can have weddings. There comes Gujarāṭi brahmin |
| 8  |                | and he knows Sanskrit. He make the prayers.         |
| 9  | R              | Does he come from the main Hindu temple?            |
| 10 | Sty            | Yes.  |
| 11 | R              | Do Telugu speakers ever go there?                   |
| 12 | Sty            | No. Sometimes maybe.                                |
| 13 | R              | Not very often?                                     |
| 14 | Sty            | Not often.  |
| 15 | R              | Do you have a statue of a God in the house?         |
| 16 | Sty            | Very small statue of Kṛṣṇa.                         |
| 17 | R              | Is Kṛṣṇa important to you?                          |
| 18 | Sty            | He is. After all Gods is born, he is born after.    |

The Telugu speakers in Churchtown are clearly a cultural minority and it seems reasonable to suppose that Satya felt a certain degree of cultural isolation. From the above conversation it is clear that Telugu speakers have no active social centre combined with a temple. The researcher understood from Satya that some people lived at the 'temple' house and that it was only used for religious purposes on Sundays.

Certainly at college Satya gave the impression of having a sense of isolation. He mixed relatively little with other students and was often withdrawn and quiet. Unlike other

Hindu students he was unable to leave college and return to a thriving Indian culture. He was culturally isolated both at college and in Hindu society.

In order to seek falsifying data to contrast with what had been said by students, the researcher made many visits to the main Hindu temple and to the Swaminārāyan temple.

The main temple had a full-time information officer, Mr Patel, who was employed under an Urban Aid grant. He told the researcher in March 1988 that the grant would come to an end in less than a year but that he was hopeful the Local Authority would assume responsibility for payment of his salary. The researcher visited the temple one evening in March 1988 to discuss with Mr Patel the arrangements for bringing a group of students to the temple for a visit. It provided the opportunity for a general discussion. Mr Patel was urbane and articulate although rather reserved in his welcome.

The researcher and Mr Patel entered the shrine room, having first removed shoes, and the researcher was introduced to the priest. He was new to the post and had only been in this country for about one month. The priest was very small - under five feet tall - and very slightly-built. He had a thin black beard. He beamed at the researcher and made *namaskar*.<sup>20</sup> He appeared to speak little or no English but listened attentively to what was being said. Mr Patel tended to ignore the priest, and when interpretation was needed he often continued with what he wanted to say.

As a catalyst for conversation the researcher took from his pocket a small book of quotations from Śaṅkara.<sup>21</sup> The researcher said, through Mr Patel, that he often read these and found them an inspiration in his personal life. Mr Patel translated and the priest beamed. The priest reached out and took the book. He was dressed in a saffron robe and thin khaki jacket. The priest said something and Mr Patel interpreted.



1 Mr Patel (PI) He says he died at thirty-two. Very good man. He  
2 was young and he started these four groups in India  
3 ... one in north, one in south, one in east and one in  
4 west. Śaṅkaracharya, he had knowledge of what was in  
5 past and what was in future.  
6 Priest You like tea? You like tea?

The priest went away and prepared sweet milky tea flavoured with cardamom. He  
proceeded to sit in a full lotus position on an upright plastic chair, while he consumed his  
tea by pouring it little by little into the saucer.

The researcher enquired about the attitude of young people towards religion.

1 Researcher (R) I think though that many young people turn away  
2 from religion and then when they are older they come  
3 back to their faith.  
4 Mr Patel (PI) Oh yes, they get ill, they get wiser, and then they  
5 know there is one God. They have the faith in God.  
6 Priest One God! (Smiling animatedly).  
7 PI Young people, they are caught between two ways. There  
8 is the Hindu way and there is the way of the  
9 western things. These going out and dancing and  
10 having a good time.  
11 R They are between two cultures.  
12 PI Yes, there are these Hindu boys and they find English  
13 girls and live together. There are many like this  
14 in Churchtown. They have children some of them.  
15 It is no great thing; but the English girls do not  
16 understand the religion. It does not matter Christian,  
17 Muslim, Buddhist. Hinduism is very tolerant religion.  
18 It absorbs everything.

In this conversation Mr Patel clearly distinguishes between a Hindu and a western culture  
(line 8). He uses the phrase "having a good time" as a symbol of a western culture as if

one might conclude that in Hindu culture there did not exist to the same extent, the concept of pleasure for its own sake. Mr Patel continues to describe Hindu and English boys and girls living together, but significantly appears to describe the phenomenon as "no great thing" (line 15). The researcher takes this to imply that Hindu society does not regard such social phenomena as of great significance. Mr Patel appears to be saying amongst other things that such relationships will not, in his view, undermine the basic structures of Hindu society. He appears not to consider inter-marriage as a threat to Hinduism. As he concludes, Hinduism "absorbs everything". Certainly history seems to support his assertion, for neither the Mughal nor British dynasties in India, succeeded in substantially altering the infra-structure or fundamental belief system of Hinduism.

There were many other instances where Mr Patel sought to point out the tolerance of Hinduism.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | It has always interested me that we do not know                       |
| 2  |                | the authors of the <i>Bhagavad Gītā</i> and of the <i>Upaniṣads</i> , |
| 3  |                | whereas for other religions we know who wrote their                   |
| 4  |                | holy books. It is almost as if the ancient swamis                     |
| 5  |                | did not want their names preserved.                                   |
| 6  | Mr Patel (PI)  | That is it. There is no ego. There is egolessness.                    |
| 7  |                | Hinduism is not wanting to force things on people.                    |
| 8  |                | You must understand this thing. (He pauses to explain                 |
| 9  |                | to the priest what has been said).                                    |
| 10 | Priest         | (To the researcher). No name. Very good. (The priest                  |
| 11 |                | smiles a beaming smile).  |

When the researcher gave his lengthy introductory comment to the exchange, he was not aware of the response he would obtain. It seemed as if it met with the total agreement of Mr Patel for he replies "That is it" (line 6). It is tempting to explain the undoubted tolerance of some of the students in the sample, in terms of this aspect of Hinduism. One might point to Narain's acceptance of a Roman Catholic religious

education for example. However, it is dangerous to assume such causal connections, as aspects of personality can as easily be explained by inherited factors or intrinsic personal predispositions.

On another occasion the researcher discussed attitudes towards young people.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | What about young people? I get the feeling at college |
| 2  |                | that many of them are not really that interested      |
| 3  |                | in their religion. They know some of the Gods and     |
| 4  |                | Goddesses and perhaps a few special ceremonies but    |
| 5  |                | that is all.  |
| 6  | Mr Patel (PI)  | They are not interested, but we cannot force them.    |
| 7  |                | They come . . . we have this games room next door ... |
| 8  |                | you will see it . . . and they come for that. Some-   |
| 9  |                | times they come in here, but not very often.          |
| 10 | R              | There are one or two who seem to know a lot about     |
| 11 |                | Hinduism . . . because I ask them questions about     |
| 12 |                | their religion just to make conversation.             |
| 13 | PI             | Oh yes. They do come for the big festivals. They      |
| 14 |                | like them. When it is a festival we are all in here   |
| 15 |                | and we open up these doors and use the big games      |
| 16 |                | room. It is full. No room.                            |

Mr Patel again uses the phrase "but we cannot force them" (line 6). He appears to be perfectly philosophical that young people tend to use the temple as a social centre rather than a place of worship. In one final example, Mr Patel discusses the Swaminārāyan Hindus.

- |   |                |  |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1 | Mr Patel (PI)  | There are these Swaminārāyans. They have a temple    |
| 2 |                | on the other side. You have been there?              |
| 3 | Researcher (R) | Yes, I teach some students who go there.             |
| 4 | PI             | They are Hindus but they are a little strict. Hindus |
| 5 |                | just same; but they are fasting, and they do not     |
| 6 |                | take onion or garlic. They are fasting all the time. |

7                                But we are not saying these things. Everyone must  
8                                find own way to God.

When Mr Patel uses the phrase "little strict" (line 4) he exhibits an element of tolerance combined with disapproval. By using the word "little" he is lessening the effect of his undoubted critical value judgement that the Swaminārāyans are "strict". If he were exhibiting total tolerance he could have simply state their different practices without comment. However he saw fit to make a value judgement. There is some tentative evidence here that the spirit of tolerance does not extend to another Hindu sect.

Clearly Mr Patel's point of view on some of these issues may not be exactly the same as that of other adults attending the temple, or even that of the priest. However, as he has been appointed to represent the community one may assume that there is some reasonable degree of congruence between his views and those of the general Hindu community.

There is clearly considerable variety of religious praxis suggested by the data of this chapter, but certain commonalities may be identified. The diversity of mainstream Hinduism is maintained by a social system which does not give primacy to the function of the temple. Ratilal indicated that he did not attend the temple very much, because he prayed at the shrine in his home. Purshottham also described his home shrine.

The significance of the home shrines is that the decentralisation of worship in effect obviates the possibility of a single doctrinal approach to religion. It is much more likely that students will develop their own particular approaches to religion yet retaining some common features such as the sharing of major religious celebrations.



The situation at the Swaminārāyan temple appears to be rather different. In this tradition, the religious preceptor, Pramukhswāmī, transmits his teaching through the organisation of the temple. Shanti makes it clear that followers of this tradition rely upon the teaching of Pramukhswāmī. Clearly the temple has a more important religious role to play here, as there exists a unitary interpretation of reality through the teachings of the guru.

There is some evidence that the Swaminārāyan Hindus have a distinct religious system and also social norms, different at least in degree to those of mainstream Hindus. Narain certainly saw the Swaminārāyans as being an entirely separate grouping. In addition Subhash noted the existence of required behaviour patterns at the temple. This does seem slightly different from the image of universal tolerance portrayed by Mr Patel. He appears to hold up tolerance as a highly-valued attribute whether it is in the religious or social context.

The Swaminārāyan students exhibit several indications of adhering to religious norms of different kinds. Shanti continues to wear the *tilak* mark even though it attracts a certain amount of ridicule. It is true that the other Swaminārāyan students refrain from wearing the mark, but clearly there is some existing social pressure influencing Shanti. Rajendra indicates that there is little if any socialising between adolescent boys and girls in the Swaminārāyan tradition. This is certainly not true of mainstream Hinduism where, for example, Amritlal and Niru lead very active social lives. Finally, Rajendra's intention of becoming a monk indicates a level of serious commitment which one would have been surprised to locate at the mainstream temple.

In contrast to the apparent religious norms of the Swaminārāyan temple the students who attend the mainstream temple appear to do so primarily for social reasons. Narain explains that he attends the Hindu temple mainly to meet friends. Pushpa attends the temple for social events, dances and the music, and in addition for the main festivals.

Purshottham combines social visits to the temple with a certain reverence for the Gods and the statues. There certainly appears to be a prevalent attitude of tolerance within which each young person may find their own relationship with God and the religious customs of the temple.

The temple certainly does not provide systematic tuition in religious doctrine. Ratilal in fact was a member of a religious education group outside the influence of the temple organisation.

The custom of fasting among students attending the mainstream temple, further indicates the evolution of disparate approaches to religious practice. Mohan, for example, does not really understand the origin of the custom of fasting, nor the reason for participation, other than to follow in his father's tradition. Narain, on the other hand, fasts in order to relate personally to a deity. Hari fasts in order to improve his grades at Mathematics. Ratilal noted that fasting helps him to think of God. The custom appears to evolve depending upon the particular characteristics and practices of the individual family.

One feature which links the Swaminārāyan and mainstream students is that the fact and experience of being Hindu is a significant feature of their lives. Under no circumstances did Balwant intend to renege on his responsibilities at his sister's wedding. He declared that he would have to be absent from college, as if there was no possible doubt about the fact. When Narain is talking about Hindu Gods and Goddesses he can hardly talk fast enough to keep up with his ideas. He is excited about the subject. It has significance in his life. Even the urbane and sophisticated Ramesh eventually demonstrates some interest in his religious tradition.

The data of this chapter then, tends to falsify generalisation (i) at the end of Chapter Three. This statement must be modified to take into account the apparent differences between the mainstream and Swaminārāyan students:

- i (a) The Swaminārāyan students share a coherent and distinct theology which is reinforced by the value system of the temple.
- i (b) The mainstream Hindu students are evolving their own individual religious perspectives within the largely tolerant atmosphere of their temple. These students are more likely to develop a tolerant approach to other cultures and value systems.
- i (c) For students from both traditions, the experience of Hinduism is to a greater or lesser extent, a significant feature of their lives.

There is no data to falsify the other generalisations from Chapter Three. The evidence of Hari in connection with fasting for better Mathematics grades, indicates a direct connection between religious ritual and educational aspirations. It thus adds a further dimension to statement (ii).

CHAPTER 5     ACADEMIC PROGRESS

The Hindu students in the sample were not normally heard discussing religious or cultural issues around the college. These aspects of their lives would usually have remained undisclosed to teachers and to most students. The strategies of the research programme, however, were fairly successful at encouraging students to describe and reflect upon these facets of their lives.

There tended to be no such difficulty, however, in discussing educational issues or matters concerning life at the college. Students could be overheard in conversation on these topics, or would willingly give their opinions on a diversity of matters. It was considerably easier for the researcher to ask a simple question on an educational matter which would initiate a discussion, than it was sometimes to explore religious or cultural issues. In March 1987, the researcher discussed with Hari reasons for the latter continuing with his education after the age of compulsory schooling.

- 1

Researcher (R)

I am interested why you wanted to
- 2

carry on with your education. You had
- 3

alternatives . . . looking for a job,
- 4

YTS. Why college?
- 5

Hari (H)

Well, not very good qualifications . . . when
- 6

I left school I didn't have good qualifications,
- 7

and I didn't think I would stand
- 8

much chance of getting a job . . .
- 9

same with YTS . . . I might be on
- 10

scheme for twelve months and then
- 11

not get job. So really, there was not
- 12

much choice . . . and I wanted
- 13

college anyway.
- 14

R

I suppose as well your parents preferred
- 15

college?
- 16

H

They think it is better, yes. Also when I make
- 17

a marriage it is very important for us to
- 18

have good education.



19 R Oh yes, I've seen in *Amar Deep* . . . adverts  
 20 . . . do you know it . . . *Amar Deep*?  
 21 H (Shakes head).  
 22 R Oh, it's a weekly Hindi magazine. Adverts say  
 23 what education and qualifications you have.  
 24 H So it is important to go to college.

In his response to the researcher's opening question, Hari suggests that his lack of qualifications is the main reason for continuing with education. Hari talks (lines 11-12) as if there was little practical alternative to remaining at college to pursue qualifications. In fact, there were a number of YTS schemes in the Churchtown area offering sequential training and an almost certain prospect of employment on completion. The more respected schemes were generally associated with large companies. The fact of Hari's continued pursuit of qualifications is in accord with the results of Professor J Eggleston's research study of 14 to 18 year olds from minority ethnic groups:

Black respondents in continuing education were willing to invest a great deal of persistence in the pursuit of qualifications. Half of those leaving school after a one year sixth form course were intending to go on to college, compared with less than one fifth of whites. About a third of respondents of South Asian origin and Afro-Caribbean girls were envisaging spending at least three years before taking 'A' level examinations, and a greater proportion were hoping to get 'A' levels.<sup>1</sup>

While this research study was concerned with a wide range of different ethnic groups, it raises the issue of the eager pursuit of qualifications - an issue which was often raised by the Hindu students of the sample.

Later in the conversation (line 17) Hari indicates a very pragmatic justification for the gaining of academic qualifications. Marriage, in the Hindu community, is a social contract in which perceived status plays a very important part; and educational attainment is a traditional component in determining status.

... in this system of marriage alliances are contracted within families rather than between two individuals. These ties between families are maintained throughout life via a complex system of ritual gift-giving. Marriages tend to be arranged between families of equal status, although hypergamous marriages are also fairly common. As well as caste, other symbols of status such as wealth, the educational level of the bride and groom, etc., are also regarded as being important.<sup>2</sup>

Presumably also, the stated preference of parents for a college education (line 16) is at least partially related to this question of status and eventual marriage.

The issue of marriage was also mentioned by Narain in a discussion in March 1987.

- 1    Researcher (R)        is education important?
- 2    Narain (N)            Education very important for a good
- 3                            marriage. We advertise the education
- 4                            we have had and then we get a
- 5                            good bride. It is very important to
- 6                            make a good marriage.
- 7    R                      What do you feel is the most important
- 8                            purpose of education?
- 9    N                      Getting a job. It helps you get a good job like
- 10                           chartered accountant.
- 11   R                      Are there any other uses?
- 12   N                      Relatives always ask about education. Say you
- 13                           go to uncle's house, they always say, "How are
- 14                           your studies?" "What are you doing?" "How many
- 15                           'O' levels?"

When Narain employs the word "advertise" (line 3) it may well be a significant usage in that it implies the concept of education as a commodity to be traded, rather like a commercial entity. This conception of education may explain the persistence with which qualifications are pursued. It is a conception which, while not excluding notions of the intrinsic worth of education, tends to emphasise its functional utility in gaining extrinsic

rewards. Education is perhaps perceived as an entity to be gained as rapidly and efficiently as possible, and in measurable quantities - measurable, that is, by examination results. This is a theme to which the research returns later in the chapter.

Narain's final remark of the conversation indicates the degree of social pressure which may be placed on Hindu teenagers by relatives. This comment further supports the assertion that educational progress is perceived as very important by adults, presumably because a high level of educational attainment confers social status. In line 9 Narain confirms that one of the main functions of education is to give access to high status employment, such as accountancy.

It seems a reasonable assumption that immigrant parents in any society would place great emphasis upon the educational achievement of their children, in the belief that this represents a fairly certain road to upward social mobility. This was certainly one of the conclusions of a report for the Commission for Racial Equality, which was published in 1978.

Any consideration of aspirations must, of course, also take into account pressures exerted by parents. There is no doubt that for the Asian sample this is a major factor in shaping aspirations: with the first generation in many cases transferring its own unfulfilled aspirations onto their children. Their children see formal qualifications not only as a passport for obtaining a job within Leicester, or elsewhere in the United Kingdom, but also as an asset which can be used on the international labour market.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of some students it was difficult to separate intrinsic motivation from the influence of parents. It is possible that Rajesh was influenced by his father who was studying part-time for a degree, but in a conversation held in May 1987, Rajesh revealed quite clearly, extensive academic ambitions.



- 1 Researcher (R) This again is rather a difficult question,  
2 but when you come here to college do  
3 you ever feel at all strange or different  
4 because you come from an Indian background?  
5 Rajesh (Raj) No, I feel at home in college. I like it.  
6 R Well . . . would you ever like to go  
7 back to India?  
8 Raj Yes, like to return to India . . . live  
9 there. My plan is to do BTEC National  
10 in Sciences and then go to University  
11 and get qualified. Then maybe I go to  
12 India and stay there. I have done this + + +

At this stage, Rajesh removed from his inside jacket pocket a neatly folded piece of paper, which he unfolded and presented to the researcher. On the paper was drawn an extremely detailed flow chart indicating the route which Rajesh intended to take to higher education. The chart commenced with BTEC National Diploma in Sciences, through university entrance, first degree, Masters degree, Doctorate, culminating in a professional appointment. The chart showed some alternative routes here and there, and was so comprehensive that Rajesh had clearly received considerable help in drawing it - if in fact he had been responsible for drawing it.

Rajesh, however, had not at this stage, demonstrated any significant academic ability. On leaving school he had obtained CSE Grade 4 in both English and Biology, an unclassified grade in GCE 'O' level Chemistry, and had failed to obtain any qualification in Mathematics.

The researcher returned the chart with a smile and offered Rajesh best wishes with his ambitions. There seemed little else that could reasonably be said in the face of such intense hope and aspiration for the future. The researcher was fairly confident that in the fullness of time Rajesh would come to realise himself that he would be advised to lower the level of his aspirations.



In the above dialogue (lines 11 and 12) Rajesh indicates a wish to return to India. Several other students in the sample also considered the possibility of a return to India at some stage, all for their own individual reasons. Rajesh was the only one who clearly thought in terms of gaining qualifications, and then using them for employment in India.

Rajesh sustained his interest in academic study and successfully completed his CPVE programme. He returned the following year and re-enrolled as a full-time student. The researcher spoke to him in the library in November 1987.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | What course are you doing now Rajesh?           |
| 2  | Rajesh (Raj)   | BTEC Science.                                   |
| 3  | R              | Is that the First Diploma in Science?           |
| 4  | Raj            | Yes.  |
| 5  | R              | I was interested in what you thought about CPVE |
| 6  |                | looking back. It must have helped you - say     |
| 7  |                | getting onto BTEC. Did you do an 'O' level      |
| 8  |                | Science subject?                                |
| 9  | Raj            | Did BTEC Level 1 in Physical Science.           |
| 10 | R              | Oh yes, that's right. Did you pass it?          |
| 11 | Raj            | Yes (smiling).                                  |
| 12 | R              | That must have helped a lot. You did very well. |

Rajesh had in effect used the CPVE programme as a means of gaining an entry qualification - namely BTEC Level 1 - to the BTEC First Diploma course (line 9). This function of enabling progression within the college system was a major purpose of CPVE.

The course tutor for BTEC told the researcher that although Rajesh was a very enthusiastic student, he was struggling with the content of the First Diploma Science course. In fact, Rajesh gradually seemed to develop a sense of perspective about his own academic abilities.

Later in the above conversation, the researcher raised with Rajesh the idea of continuation after BTEC First Diploma:

- 1

Researcher (R)

What are you wanting to do when you finish this course?
- 2
- 3

Rajesh (Raj)

BTEC National.
- 4

R

Is that in science?
- 3

Raj

Yes.
- 6

R

You always wanted eventually to do a degree.
- 7

Is that still your ambition?
- 8

Raj

Yes, think so.

Although Rajesh still wishes to continue academic studies towards BTEC National Diploma level (which would give him entry to, say, a degree course at a Polytechnic) he appears slightly hesitant (line 8) about the idea of gaining a degree.

In January 1988, the researcher spoke to Rajesh once more.

- 1

Researcher (R)

Are you enjoying the course?
- 2

Rajesh (Raj)

Yes, OK.
- 3

R

Are you getting on all right? Getting good grades?
- 4

Raj

Maths is a bit difficult. I'm doing OK.
- 5

R

Do you still want to get on the National Diploma?
- 6

Raj

Well, I'm thinking about 'A' levels now. I've
- 7

changed my mind.
- 8

R

Physics, Chemistry?
- 9

Raj

I think so.
- 10

R

Have you any ideas about a job yet?
- 11

Raj

I think a physics laboratory. I'd like to
- 12

work in one.

In terms of aspirations, Rajesh seems to have reviewed his ambitions somewhat. When he says (lines 11 and 12) he would like to work in a physics laboratory, he does not specify any particular high-status job, and he also employs the word "think" (lines 9 and 11) implying a certain degree of doubt about the direction he is taking.

In fact, Rajesh failed to complete the year on the BTEC First Diploma course. He left during the summer term, after several discussions with his course tutor about his relatively low level of achievement. His departure was voluntary. The researcher saw him several times afterwards. Six months after leaving college he was still unemployed and without any precise plans for the future.

After her CPVE year, Pushpa progressed to BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies. In October 1987, the researcher persuaded her to take part in a discussion in front of some CPVE students in order to illustrate the demands made upon them by a First Diploma course.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Was it hard to get on BTEC First?                   |
| 2  |                | Did they ask your group tutor?                      |
| 3  | Pushpa (P)     | Mrs Oakley*, yeh. They ask how we                   |
| 4  |                | did on coursework and attendance and                |
| 5  |                | that. Then its things like that and                 |
| 6  |                | they decide after they give you an                  |
| 7  |                | interview, so its quite hard to get on              |
| 8  |                | . . . its hard to get on yeh.                       |
| 9  | R              | Is it Mrs Carey* the tutor?                         |
| 10 | P              | That's it Mrs Carey*, and she can                   |
| 11 |                | give you a test if she's not sure                   |
| 12 |                | you're good enough.                                 |
| 13 | R              | How do you find the course then?                    |
| 14 | P              | Attendance is very strict . . . more                |
| 15 |                | strict than on CPVE. If you miss                    |
| 16 |                | anything Mrs Carey sends a note                     |
| 17 |                | to Mr Robin* <sup>4</sup> and he sees you . . . and |
| 18 |                | if you don't do a piece of work . . . there's       |

19		integrated assignments and we have to do
20		them all or we fail the course. It's really hard.
21	R	What do you want to do next year?
22	P	National.
23	R	Have you thought about a job?
24	P	I'd like something like management.

When Pushpa says (line 7) that it is quite difficult to be accepted onto the First Diploma course, she is, in a sense, quite correct. CPVE students are in competition with school pupils who are one year younger, but almost certainly have better GCE/GCSE grades than the CPVE students. The BTEC First Diploma course is oversubscribed each year, with most of the places going to direct entrants from schools. Those CPVE students who gain entry often do so with the support of good references from their college tutors.

Of course, Pushpa is talking in front of students who are twelve months younger than she, and there is a possibility that she is stressing the difficulty of both gaining entry and continuing on the course, in order to emphasise her own achievement. There is evidence for this (line 10) when she says that an applicant "can" be given a test, the expression suggesting that this measure was unnecessary in her own case. She later points out (line 14) that attendance is very strict and that failure to hand in assignments results in failure on the whole course (line 20). Pushpa, like Rajesh, has the clear ambition of continuing to BTEC National Diploma (line 22).

In fact, in the May of the previous academic year the researcher had a staff room discussion with Mrs Oakley about Pushpa's ability to progress to BTEC National.

1	Mrs Oakley (O)	I don't really think that she's . . . really
2		BTEC National material.
3	Researcher (R)	I'm a bit surprised. She seems to work
4		very hard and her work's neat.



5      O                    She appears to work hard but she doesn't  
6                            do much homework. You remember when  
7                            her father came to the last parents evening,  
8                            he asked me if she ever gets any  
9                            homework. Obviously she doesn't take it  
10                           home.  
11     R                    Ah.  
12     O                    She has lots of work she could take  
13                            home. Anyway, her father promised to  
14                            talk to her about it, and she does some  
15                            now, but obviously because she is under  
16                            some pressure.  
17     R                    Perhaps when it comes to it she is  
18                            not that well motivated.  
19     O                    I think she would struggle at National.  
20                            I'm sure she would be all right at  
21                            First Diploma.

This exchange illustrates the sometimes rather imprecise character of staff room discussions. The conversation took place while both participants were eating sandwiches, and this may account for the lack of rigorous analysis of which both are guilty. The qualities which the researcher lists (line 4) are scarcely those necessary to determine Pushpa's academic potential; and Mrs Oakley's preoccupation with taking homework home to complete, seems irrelevant, when the essential function is the quality of the finished work. There is more evidence (lines 13-15) of the interest shown in education by parents, and also, in this case, the influence which can be exerted on children.

Whereas English language tuition is commonly regarded as an essential element in the education of some ethnic minority students,<sup>5</sup> it has emerged from this research that some students perceive the acquisition or maintenance of native tongue skills as very important. Hari mentioned his mother-tongue in the following conversation from March 1987:

1	Researcher (R)	Do you feel it is important to keep your
2		culture going? . . . by that I mean
3		religion, customs, way of life?
4	Hari (H)	Yes (thinking for a long time). I want to
5		keep my language Gujarāti most of all.
6	R	Is that the most important thing?
7	H	Yes, because I could not speak to my
8		grandparents. I wouldn't be able to
9		talk to them.
10	R	Well do you think we at college do enough
11		to help in this. Should we put on
12		Gujarāti classes or have more Asian
13		language teachers? It would be quite
14		easy but we don't do very much of that.
15	H	It is not necessary. We have classes at
16		the temple on Saturday mornings and
17		children go there to learn Gujarāti. There
18		is no need to come to college.

The researcher was very interested that Hari prioritised his mother-tongue as the most important cultural aspect to sustain; and that he stated this in the context of communicating with his grandparents. It may be significant that he does not phrase this in terms of, say, helping his grandparents complete forms or go to the Post Office. Rather he says (line 8), "I wouldn't be able to talk to them". This appears to carry implications that it is the act of communicating with his grandparents which is important to Hari, and as they are unlikely to be able to teach him anything about British society, it seems probable that Hari values the contact with relatives who represent his cultural roots. His grandparents are likely to have retained the general Hindu culture in a form relatively unamended, in comparison with his parents. It appears probable that this is why Hari wishes to retain his ability to speak Gujarāti.

There may also be an implicit sense of Hari being aware that his grandparents can easily become isolated in Western society, and that his ability to communicate with them was an important feature of their continued adjustment to their lives.

Ramesh was in a rather different position to Hari in the sense that he spoke Panjabi as his mother-tongue and did not understand Gujarāṭi. That this had an effect upon his social life is indicated in the following extract from a conversation in April 1987.

- |   |                |   |
|---|----------------|---|
| 1 | Researcher (R) | You say you do not understand Gujarāṭi,       |
| 2 |                | but you speak Panjabi.                        |
| 3 | Ramesh (Ra)    | Sometimes its a bit strange . . . say         |
| 4 |                | at the temple . . . I don't really understand |
| 5 |                | what's going on, so I don't like going        |
| 6 |                | very much. Everyone speaks in Gujarāṭi        |
| 7 |                | and I can't understand them. I don't          |
| 8 |                | understand their writing either.              |

As there is no Panjabi Hindu temple in Churchtown, Ramesh clearly tries to attend the Gujarāṭi temple, but he portrays a picture of an individual in an alien culture. Almost certainly, some of the religious ceremonies and symbols will have seemed familiar, but Ramesh begins the utterance by saying "it's a bit strange" and "I don't really understand what's going on". Presumably, he finds the situation "strange" because although he feels part of the general culture, and although he is a Hindu, there are so many aspects he cannot understand because the medium of communication is Gujarāṭi.

The type of ambition demonstrated by Rajesh was also, to some extent, characteristic of Shanti. He badly wanted to enter the BTEC system, and aspired to progress from CPVE directly to BTEC National Diploma level. In this way, he would avoid the intermediate year devoted to BTEC First Diploma. By February 1988 he had applied for BTEC National and was half-way through his CPVE course. In a conversation in the library the researcher asked him about his plans.

1	Researcher (R)	Are you happy now you have decided
2		not to go on a YTS scheme?
3	Shanti (Sh)	Yes, happy.
4	R	What about your parents? They want you
5		to carry on here?
6	Sh	Yes, they do. It is all right.
7	R	Would they rather you were in education
8		or YTS?
9	Sh	They don't like YTS. I want to do the
10		National.

It seems a reasonable assumption that Shanti would never have entertained YTS as an alternative to college, if it had not been for his realisation that CPVE had little status in the hierarchy of college provision. There has clearly been some parental pressure to remain at college (lines 6 and 9), coupled with Shanti's enthusiasm to progress as rapidly as possible to a high-status course such as BTEC National Diploma (line 10).

In passing, it is interesting to note (line 7) that the researcher appears to distinguish between an educational provision and that of YTS - which is presumably something different, but not "education". If this utterance reflects a clear perception on the part of the researcher then it would be interesting to reflect upon the impact of this on students such as Shanti.

A few weeks later, Shanti revealed more of the attitude of his parents:

1	Researcher (R)	It always seems to me that education
2		is very important to Hindu families, and
3		when I first met you you seemed very keen
4		to continue your education. Is that right?
5	Shanti (Sh)	My father always tells me I must get
6		my education. When I left school he would



7                   not let me get an apprenticeship and said  
8                   I must come to college.  
9       R            I know you didn't do as well as you wanted  
10                 in 'O' levels - does it matter if it takes  
11                 a long time to complete your studies?  
12       Sh         Not really. I must carry on. It is what my  
13                 father wants. Even if it takes me 'til I am  
14                 twenty.

The researcher is clearly asking Shanti (line 3) what he thinks about the issue of continuing education, yet Shanti answers the question from the point of view of his father. It appears that Shanti's father's perspective on this issue is central as far as the family is concerned. Shanti records his father as "telling" him (line 5), which has clear authoritarian implications. In addition, Shanti uses the phrase "get my education" (lines 5 and 6) which gives the impression that his father reifies the notion of education as an entity which one may obtain, and having gained it, one possesses it for life. This is a concept of education as a commodity which can subsequently be traded in the market place.

The remainder of this utterance calls into serious question whether it is really Shanti's choice that he remain at college. One is left wondering whether he would rather join a YTS scheme or try to obtain a job directly. There is no direct statement or affirmation that Shanti himself wishes to remain at college. In his final utterance (line 13) when he says that staying at college is "what my father wants", he appears to be indirectly affirming that it is not what he wants.

The question of parental influence within the Asian community in determining a son or daughter's route through the educational system is interesting in that one might surmise that language difficulties would prevent many parents from being in a position to gain

adequate knowledge about the college system. Research carried out at South London College and at Bradford and Ilkley Community College, appears to support this view:

According to the perceptions of the parents, over 70 per cent of Asian school children and college students, whether boys or girls, make their own choices about their future careers. The evidence suggests that lack of information about the education system leaves parents with little chance of participating in discussions about their children's choice to the extent they might wish to. This view was endorsed by local community groups who felt that Asian parents had little knowledge of the FE system.<sup>6</sup>

Although this may well represent the general picture, the present research seems to indicate that it is possible for parents to take a firm stand on the choice between college or YTS, and in some cases on the choice between certain examination systems within the same subject area. Balwant provides an interesting case study in the persistence with which a student can pursue a specific educational objective.

Balwant enrolled on the CPVE programme in September 1987 with relatively low qualifications - a Grade 4 CSE in Mathematics and Grade 3 in English. He had originally wanted to enrol on a course to take five GCE 'O' levels, but for this he needed five subjects at Grade 3 CSE - which he did not possess. Grade 3 CSE was the college entry requirement for a GCE 'O' level class. The main purpose of the regulation was to keep group sizes at a reasonable level for daytime classes. It was still possible to enrol for an evening 'O' level class without any formal qualifications.

Balwant had made arrangements through his personal tutor to join a GCE 'O' level class for English Language, but his tutor had not been able to let him enrol for 'O' level Mathematics because of the above-mentioned regulations. The researcher spoke to Balwant towards the end of September and advised him to join an evening class at the college. The following week his personal tutor heard that Balwant had been walking round college trying to persuade any mathematics teacher he could find to admit him to

one of their 'O' level classes. He had apparently been successful in finding a teacher who had not asked questions about qualifications, and who had enrolled Balwant. The personal tutor was particularly annoyed because the timing of the Mathematics class involved Balwant in missing two CPVE classes - one in Business Studies and one in Computing. It fell to the researcher as course tutor to discuss the matter with Balwant.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | I understand from your tutor that you have been    |
| 2  |                | indulging in a little private enterprise (smiling) |
| 3  |                | and fixed yourself up with a Maths class?          |
| 4  | Balwant (B)    | (Smiling) Yes, sir.                                |
| 5  | R              | Well, that's not really what I asked you to        |
| 6  |                | do is it?  |
| 7  | B              | No, sir.   |
| 8  | R              | Are you still attending the evening class?         |
| 9  | B              | No sir, I've given it up. (The researcher was      |
| 10 |                | not convinced that Balwant had even started.)      |
| 11 | R              | Was that when you arranged this new class?         |
| 12 | B              | Yes sir.   |
| 13 | R              | You see, you're really twisting my arm a           |
| 14 |                | bit here. You've given up the evening class        |
| 15 |                | and started a class which means you                |
| 16 |                | miss some of the CPVE programme. I might           |
| 17 |                | as well have put you in the GCE class              |
| 18 |                | from the beginning.                                |
| 19 | B              | (Looks down).                                      |
| 20 | R              | The point is that Business Studies and             |
| 21 |                | Computing are necessary for you to get your        |
| 22 |                | CPVE. (Thinking). You're obviously very keen to    |
| 23 |                | get qualifications - particularly Maths.           |
| 24 |                | Where does this come from? Are you keen            |
| 25 |                | yourself, or are your parents encouraging you?     |
| 26 | B              | Yes sir. My father wants me to get qualifications. |
| 27 |                | He says I must get a lot of GCSE's if              |
| 28 |                | I can. And I want to as well. Both                 |
| 29 |                | really. It's me as well. I want to study and carry |
| 30 |                | on with my education.                              |
| 31 | R              | What about a career? What job do you want to do?   |
| 32 | B              | My uncles are all accountants and that is what I   |



- 33                    want to be - chartered accountant. I work there  
34                    with them in the holidays - answer the telephone and  
35                    fill forms. They let me help. That is why I want  
36                    Maths to study to be chartered accountant.  
37    R                Is your father an accountant? What does he do?  
38    B                He works at Peter Craig. (He would not specify the job).  
39    R                But he wants you to study?  
40    B                He wants me to study very much, yes sir.

It is perhaps significant that Balwant does not reveal the job which his father does (line 38). The researcher interpreted this as signifying that his father does not work at as prestigious a job as his uncles. Further, the researcher interpreted the last utterance as Balwant's father being especially eager for his son to succeed academically, partly because he himself did not hold as prestigious a job as he would have wished. This latter conclusion is based upon Balwant's saying that his father wants him to study "very much", which seems to be an unnecessarily forceful way to express his wishes. This may not be the correct interpretation of what is a short extract of dialogue, but it certainly appears as if Balwant is strongly encouraged by his father to pursue his education and to gain qualifications.

At the conclusion of the above conversation the researcher decided to compromise for the time being and asked Balwant to attend the CPVE computing class, but suggested that he continue with the remainder of the mathematics classes until further notice.

The researcher was sympathetic to Balwant in terms of the family pressures to obtain better qualifications, and took as an index of those pressures, the determination exhibited by Balwant in trying to find a Mathematics teacher willing to accept him into his class.

The urge to obtain qualifications was noted during the 1986 seminar organised by the National Union of Students:



Underlying the specific motivation of the students to attend FE College, there was a more general motivation to extend their education. The results of the written questionnaire indicated the importance which some of the participants attached to the obtaining of qualifications. During the discussion this point was further emphasised.

"... being black people in this country we need to have more pieces of paper to wave in their faces than anybody else. You've got to have the relevant qualifications and everything. If you don't have more than the next person who is not black are you going to get the job?"<sup>7</sup>

Several of Balwant's teachers were not sympathetic to his case. They perceived him as a trouble-maker, someone who was disrupting "the system" when he "patently" did not have the acquired academic background for a GCSE/'O' level repeat course.

A teacher who was senior to the researcher made the following comment:

Is that boy called Balwant? He's a bloody nuisance. I don't want to see him again, and I told him so. He wants to get on to the GCSE course. What does he think we have entry qualifications for?

On another occasion a colleague of the researcher said to Balwant:

I'm getting fed up of you . . . there are other students beside you, you know. You shouldn't be going to that class. Mr Oliver's told you and I've told you. You just won't be told. Now get in that class and stop nattering.

Later in the day the researcher once again discussed the matter with Balwant explaining that the entry requirement for GCSE courses resulted from the past performance of students on 'O' level courses, and the anticipated results of students with certain entry grades. The researcher was also under some pressure from CPVe lecturers who feared

that if Balwant were seen "to get away with it" there would be an exodus of CPVE students all trying to find themselves illicit places in GCSE classes.

The researcher (after probably a certain amount of prevarication and indecisive course leadership) then told Balwant that he could attend the Mathematics classes which involved not missing CPVE, but that his CPVE must carry priority because that was the course for which he was enrolled. At this point, Balwant's eyes filled with tears and he said that the Maths teacher had told him that he could only continue if he attended all the classes.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Well Balwant, the only alternative I have then                              |
| 2  |                | is for you to start going to the evening class                              |
| 3  |                | again. You shouldn't really have given it up                                |
| 4  |                | in the first place. Which evening is it?                                    |
| 5  | Balwant (B)    | Thursday, sir.  |
| 6  | R              | Where is it?  |
| 7  | B              | Here, sir.  |
| 8  | R              | This college?   |
| 9  | B              | Yes, sir.   |
| 10 | R              | Who is the teacher? Do you know the teacher's name?                         |
| 11 | B              | No sir. He is not one of the regular teachers. He is old.                   |
| 12 | R              | What time does the class start?   |
| 13 | B              | Six-thirty, sir; until nine.  |
| 14 | R              | Do you stop here, or will you go home at four-fifteen and then come back?   |
| 15 | B              | Go home, sir, and have something to eat, because I am fasting on Thursdays. |
| 16 | R              | Oh, I know other Hindu students who do that. Is it just Thursdays?          |
| 17 | B              | Yes, sir.   |
| 18 | R              | You can have fruit juice during the day though?                             |
| 19 | B              | Yes, just one big meal at evening time.                                     |
| 20 | R              | Who asks you to do this? Is it the priest at the temple?                    |
| 21 | B              | No, my mother. She says it will help my education.                          |
| 22 |                | I have been doing it for about a year. It is for my                         |
| 23 |                | education, sir. I really want to do GCSE, sir. (His                         |
| 24 |                | eyes filled with tears once again).   |

25 R But you will be! That is what the evening class is  
 26 for. It's called GCSE Maths isn't it?  
 27 B Yes sir.  
 28 R You're sure that's the title?  
 29 B Yes sir.  
 30 R Well, they will enter you then. You'll take GCSE.  
 31 Didn't you realise that?  
 32 B No sir, I thought it was just extra maths. My father  
 33 really wants me to do GCSE. He will be angry with me  
 34 if I am not doing GCSE.  
 35 R Well, look, you are definitely doing GCSE and I will  
 36 be only too happy to see your father and mother to  
 37 explain about the course you are doing.

Throughout this conversation Balwant demonstrates the facility to add an emotive layer of meaning to his utterances. When asked if he knows the name of the evening mathematics teacher, he does not restrict himself to the affirmative or negative (line 11) but defines the teacher as not being one of the "regular" teachers. This word is indexical to the conversation, as in this case it has a pejorative connotation. Balwant is stating that the evening maths teacher is not one of the teachers who either normally teaches him during the daytime; or to his knowledge, takes his friends and acquaintances. The clear issue though, is that Balwant is probably not in a position to know who is or is not a permanent member of staff, yet he defines this particular teacher as not being a 'regular' teacher. The clear implication is that if the teacher is not 'regular', then he is probably 'part-time'; not on the permanent staff; or a teacher who has been given a widely-dispersed timetable.

The second descriptor used by Balwant is that the teacher is 'old' (line 11). Here again, Balwant's choice of adjective is harsh in its simplicity. The teacher could have been described as 'elderly'; 'probably retired'; 'older'; 'senior'; 'greying'; 'experienced'; or using one of a multitude of other descriptive phrases.

The researcher uses his own sense-assembly procedures to first of all analyse the description; secondly to hear the description as essentially pejorative, even though the words used are not in any specific sense derogatory; thirdly to reject the assumptions behind Balwant's utterance on the grounds that Balwant's statement is designed to present to the researcher the impression that the evening maths teacher is, in some way, inadequate; and fourthly to ignore Balwant's description because of its perceived unreliability. The researcher thus hears Balwant's utterance as being indexical to a situation in which Balwant wishes to portray the maths teacher as being less than effective.

Balwant appears to be fasting for a similar reason to Hari. That is, there is the expectation that it will improve his educational performance. The transition (line 23) from explaining the purpose of fasting to making the plea to study GCSE Maths is quite marked. The statement, 'I really want to do GCSE Sir', is far less a statement than an emotional, at once plaintive and naive in its openness.

It could be viewed as the ploy of a skilled actor, playing upon the emotions of the researcher; or as an open and honest expression of a profound wish. The researcher interpreted it as the latter, partly on the basis of the considerable attempts made by Balwant to circumvent the college system and study GCSE. The researcher interpreted Balwant's actions and statements as the sincere expressions of an eager student.

Balwant reveals later (line 32) further insights into his conceptualisation of the education system. Even though the evening class is actually named 'GCSE', and also takes place in the main college building, Balwant sees it as "just extra maths". In other words, he is sensitive to the concept of mainstream education which he perceives as essentially day-time classes. Evening classes are of less-status and therefore less likely to involve certification by examination.



Later in the same utterance the researcher gains an insight into the undoubted social pressures which are exerted upon Balwant. The use of the word 'angry' (line 33) reflects what is likely to be very strong paternal pressure upon Balwant, to embark on high-status courses and to succeed on these. One can only guess at the psychological effects on a student who is fundamentally ill-equipped to achieve high academic results. The rather sad, but not entirely unexpected result was that Balwant failed his Mathematics exam at the end of the year.

In hearing the word 'angry' (line 33) the researcher does not understand a father who is annoyed because his son has not chosen what he regards as the best course; rather he understands a range of cultural pressures operating, and a deep-seated desire on the part of a Hindu father for his son to succeed in life.

Ethnomethodologists accept the premise that words and activities do not possess unequivocal meanings which are retained across different occasions of their use. They observe that the same words can have different meanings depending on the context of their use, and recognise that members have to make adequate repairs of the essential indexicality of words and activities all the time.<sup>8</sup>

The word 'angry' does have a common-sense meaning. No-one is confused as to the 'meaning' of the word. However, as G C F Payne indicates above, there is the possibility of meanings which are context-dependent.

The researcher interprets the word as representing profound displeasure, disappointment, irritation and embarrassment on the part of a father whose son, in his eyes, has failed to fulfil the anticipated social role prepared for him. This social role is likely to be one involving a professional job with considerable advance training; good financial rewards and status in the community. The researcher accomplishes these interpretations because

of his previous knowledge and experience of Hindu culture; previous conversations with Balwant; and the latter's attempts to ensure that he is, in fact, following a GCSE course. The researcher uses common-sense reasoning to make sense of the use of the word "angry". The reasoning process by which he arrives at this conclusion remains largely unexamined by the researcher. The conclusion is arrived at by a mixture of intuition and spontaneous reasoning. The researcher as member, does not engage in any logical, long-term analysis of the situation. A V Cicourel's research into the methods of police investigations led him to the conclusion that common-sense reasoning on the part of police-officers was a major method in analysing the 'facts' of a criminal offence.

The assumption of guilt or innocence on intuitive, common-sense grounds, based on considerable experience in typing different persons suspected or labelled offenders, is the core of law enforcement.<sup>9</sup>

This process of everyday reasoning is central to the interpretive sociologist's way of understanding the social world. The researcher, as a social member, employs this methodic practice while at the same time seeking to expose the practices of others.

The progress of some students at college is held back because of language difficulties and these problems manifest themselves in all kinds of unanticipated ways. All CPVE students were required to complete a period of work experience as an essential component of the course. The minimal period was normally three weeks. Satya had been offered a three-week placement at a town-centre bank during May 1989, but the episode had ended rather more quickly than expected. The following conversation took place in a classroom after a lesson.

- |   |                |  |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1 | Researcher (R) | Didn't you stay at the bank?                           |
| 2 | Satya (Sty)    | I go one day, but then on Tuesday I was ill ... poorly |
| 3 |                | ... so I go on Wednesday and the manager he send       |
| 4 |                | me back to college.                                    |

5 R Did you contact the bank on the Tuesday?

6 Sty No sir.

7 R What did Mr Hughes\*<sup>10</sup> say?

8 Sty He say I fail the course now.

9 R Because you didn't complete the work experience?

10 Sty Yes sir (Satya's eyes fill with tears).

11 R Well that's not necessarily true. Have you been

12 worrying about that since you left?

13 Sty Yes sir.

14 R What a shame . . . well don't worry . . . you work in

15 an Indian restaurant some nights a week don't you?

16 Sty Yes, Maharajah, sir.

17 R Well, all we do is we'll send an assessment form

18 to them for them to describe how you are going on, and

19 if the report is OK, then you will pass. There's no

20 problem really. As long as we have some evidence of

21 you at work. What did you do at the bank?

22 Sty Nothing really. I sit and count credit slips like.

23 R Did anyone show you what to do?

24 Sty No, not really. This lady, she is walking round and

25 showing a little bit, but I no understand. I no

26 understand what they say.

27 R Couldn't you understand what they were saying - the

28 language . . . the English?

29 Sty No sir.

30 R Were you the only Asian person there?

31 Sty Yes sir.

32 R Was that a problem? Did it bother you?

33 Sty No sir . . . not bother me.

34 R You're sure . . . you didn't feel on your own because

35 you were the only Asian?

36 Sty No sir, it was OK. I just not understand work and

37 money - I not like the money.

38 R Why was that?

39 Sty Because if I make mistake with money, it bring

40 troubles ... I be in troubles. I not like working

41 with money. Too much troubles.



This sequence of events and the account provided by Satya raises a number of interesting questions. As Satya recounts (line 6) he did not contact the bank to explain his absence. The researcher does not find this very surprising. Satya is very diffident and has a poor command of oral English, which is apparently verified later in the conversation (line 29). Moreover, in the utterance commencing on line 24, Satya gives the impression that not only does he not understand what was said to him, but there is a suggestion that he does not really appreciate the entire context of the work. If this is so, then he would hardly have the confidence to approach a large formal bureaucracy to explain his absence on the second day of work. It would be much simpler to forget the issue until the next day.

However, there are at least two other alternatives. The first is that Satya simply did not know that it was a procedural requirement to notify absence; and secondly, that he was not ill at all, but so frightened or alienated by the work context that he decided he could not face the second day there.

It is very difficult to guess what actually happened because Satya would have been likely to use the most plausible story (that is, illness) for the researcher in any case. This is not to malign his character, for if he felt that no matter how hard he tried he could not cope with the bank, he may have felt that a small untruth was ethically legitimate.

It remains true, however, that his tutor Mr Hughes\* took a harsh view of the situation, and left Satya with the assumption that he would fail the course (line 8). Satya had obviously been worrying and anguishing about this for the seven days between the actual event and the conversation with the researcher. The latter had not heard about the situation until the previous day. In line 11 the researcher openly contradicts the judgement of Mr Hughes\*. Such a contradiction tends to be unusual in Further Education, where much of the legitimacy of the entire teaching process rests upon students perceiving teachers as constituting a united front. In this case, the researcher



felt that the injustice to be perpetrated was so considerable that it justified using his authority as course coordinator to overrule a colleague.

The requirements of CPVE are that a student must demonstrate a period of experience of work. This is normally for a minimum of three weeks, but there is no specific requirement that this should take place in a block period or by day-release or in any other mode. It was quite normal to allow students with part-time jobs to credit this experience towards the course. It is difficult to know precisely why Mr Hughes\* took such a firm attitude on the issue.

It is clear that Satya had considerable difficulties in adopting to work in a complex bureaucracy like a bank. There is no evidence that he was adversely treated, and he apparently affirms (line 36) in response to rather circuitous prompting that he was not treated in any discriminatory way by the staff, even though he was the only Asian employee.

Clearly language difficulties were a major factor in Satya's lack of ability to adjust to the bank environment, and no doubt this problem made it very difficult to absorb basic training instructions. Nevertheless, it is almost impossible to distinguish cultural variables from factors related to Satya's general diffidence and lack of confidence.

Satya's reluctance to have dealings with money could be explained in a variety of ways. Having arrived in England relatively recently from India, he may have remembered an incident involving a member of his family who got into financial difficulties, or it may simply have been a personally-derived fear. There was clearly a reason specific to Satya, for normally Hindu students would regard a period of work experience at a bank as involving fairly high status work and therefore being desirable.

The attitudes of staff towards students (and not simply Hindu students) often appears relatively harsh. The difficulties of collecting data demonstrating staff attitudes were considerable. Firstly, the researcher eschewed clandestine recording. Secondly, it was felt that if a tape recorder had been formally introduced to meetings or staffroom gatherings then it would have substantially changed what was said. The researcher resolved his ethical difficulties by writing down sentences and brief statements from typical classroom and staffroom conversation and particularly from staff meetings. The researcher considered this to be legitimate as the utterances belonged to the public domain and there was no large-scale record of conversation.

The following extracts were spoken by four different tutors on the CPVE programme during a meeting in May 1989 to make provisional recommendations about those students who might fail the course. There was a good deal of sensible debate in the meeting but the following utterances featured at different stages in the conversation.

- 1                   What about Ashraf\*?<sup>11</sup>
- 2                   Useless Ashraf.
- 3                   You know it amazes me 'ow he finds his way 'ome twice
- 4                   a day. It's a miracle he gets 'ome at lunchtime. He
- 5                   probably don't go to the right 'ouse like. (Laughter)
- 6                   He should be shipped back to India, but he'd forget
- 7                   where he was going.
- 8
- 9                   What about Satya?
- 10                  He should be Ashraf's apprentice. (Laughter).
- 11                  Send him back to India for his work experience.
- 12
- 13                  Amritlal's not doing much.
- 14                  He reckons he's going for a job with the police . . .
- 15                  YTS as a photographer.
- 16                  He reckons he's the only one going for it.
- 17                  He'd better be or he won't stand a chance.
- 18                  He's got a pleasant personality.
- 19                  He has 'til you've taught him a few months.
- 20

21 Niru will do well at MacDonalds.  
22 She should stay there.  
23 They have all these gold stars. It really suits  
24 Asians . . . they like things like that.

Thus the above utterances are accurately recorded but are not part of a longer sequence because they were not taped. Nevertheless, they possess certain characteristics.

Firstly, there is the attempt to use humour to speak derogatively of the students (lines 3-5, line 10 and others). Secondly, there is a detectable element of racism (lines 6 and 11). Thirdly, the use of unnecessarily unpleasant remarks about students (lines 19 and 17) and finally the creation of racial stereotypes (line 23/24).

These categories of comments featured regularly in staffroom conversation and in staff meetings. To talk about students in this style became almost the norm for lengthy periods of inter-staff talk. The methodological difficulty for the researcher was that there was ample data available reflecting tutor attitudes about students but that this data could not be overtly recorded without the risk of substantially changing its nature. Secondly, this manner of speaking about students was acceptable within the confines of staff meetings or staffroom, but was not acceptable in more formal venues such as Academic Board, or on occasions when outsiders to college, such as parents, were present at say, parents' evenings. They were not comments with which tutors would have necessarily wished to associate themselves in a formal context and thus the researcher decided not to record such data in great quantity, even using fictional names for the tutors. In any case, the focus of this study remains the students' perceptions of their social world. Suffice it to say, that there was a significant staff culture which accepted the use of derogatory remarks and racial stereotypes in certain informal contexts, and that this clearly indicated something of staff attitudes towards students on the CPVE programme.

Parents' evenings provided a useful opportunity for exchanges between staff and parents, but very few parents of CPVE students ever came to the college. Twice each year letters were posted to parents informing them of Open Evening arrangements, but typically a tutor would only receive replies from three or four parents. There was no significant ethnic factor in this and indeed the number of replies received was too small for any reasonable analysis. The major difficulty with parents of Hindu or Muslim students was the matter of communication. The following is a transcript of an interview with Niru's parents from an open evening in December 1988. The conversation between the researcher and parents is exclusively with Niru's mother as her father appeared to speak no English at all.

- 1 Niru's mother (M) Niru . . . how she is doing?
- 2 Researcher (R) She is doing well. I was less happy with
- 3 her at the beginning of term but she has
- 4 settled down a lot now.
- 5 M What time in college? What time she
- 6 is leaving college?
- 7 R About four-fifteen . . . except on Thursday,
- 8 then she comes to Young Enterprise.<sup>12</sup>
- 9 M Why she not coming home until five-
- 10 thirty . . . six? This bad thing for us
- 11 in our community.
- 12 R I'm sorry, I can't say. She would normally leave
- 13 college at about four-fifteen, except on Wednesday,
- 14 then she finishes about one-fifteen, as time off for
- 15 Thursday night.
- 16 M She no come home Wednesday. What she doing?
- 17 R I'm sorry I don't know.
- 18 M She work MacDonalds.
- 19 R Yes, she's told me. She works at weekends.
- 20 M We no like. She no need to work.
- 21 R I wrote a letter to you a few weeks ago. Did you
- 22 receive it?
- 23 M No receive.



It was a matter of considerable good fortune for the college staff that Niru's parents had been informed about the Open Evening. The tutors had emphasised to Niru that they wished to talk to her parents, and that if they did not come then a tutor would visit her home. This, coupled with the obvious wish of her parents to talk to college staff, had resulted in their attendance. There was widespread suspicion amongst college staff that Niru was intercepting letters written to her parents.

The contrast and the image presented by Niru and by her parents could not have been greater. Niru was extremely westernised in appearance, with a perfect command of oral idiomatic English and above average ability at written English in comparison with other CPVE students. The researcher's field notes written during the Open Evening noted:

Her parents were very conventional - seemed rather poor - father older and tired; mother with young baby - perhaps two years - on her knee. Mother, it seems, speaks English - not father.

The conversation with Niru's mother exemplified certain general features of conversations with parents during Open Evenings. For example, there was a reluctance on the part of the researcher to be totally accurate about the nature of Niru's behaviour. He did not, for example, (lines 2-4) indicate that she habitually swore in class. The second utterance by Niru's mother indicated her priorities for the meeting. She was clearly concerned about the fact that Niru was not going home directly from college (lines 9 - 11).

The extent of the problem emerged later in the evening when one of the tutors learned that Niru had not been home by the time her parents had left to come to the Open Evening (about five forty-five) and yet, as it was a Wednesday, Niru finished at one-fifteen pm. The parents were clearly worried, and there was the added social pressure created by the knowledge of Niru's behaviour, in the Hindu community (line 11).

In his response (line 12) the researcher is clearly divorcing himself from any sense of responsibility for Niru's behaviour outside college. While this seems a legitimate position in relation to the bureaucratic requirements of his job, Niru's mother clearly feels that he either may know her whereabouts or indeed should know her whereabouts (line 16).

The issue of Niru's working at MacDonalds is clearly important to her parents. When her mother says "she no need to work" (line 20) it signifies to the researcher not merely the fact that the parents feel they supply Niru with all her reasonable material needs, but that they do not understand why Niru should actually wish to work long hours when she could be at home or at the Hindu temple. The utterance indicates a fundamental lack of understanding on the part of the parents, of the social, psychological and developmental needs of Niru.

MacDonalds provides for Niru more than simply a quantity of disposable income which she can spend on clothes and going to pubs and discos. Rather it provides a setting for socialisation with other teenagers which simultaneously is legitimate in the eyes of relatives and the Hindu community.

The final utterance of the conversation confirmed that letters from college were not reaching the parents. The researcher was reminded of the skills of some students in frustrating attempts by college tutors to contact parents. One college tutor decided as a final resort to visit the home of one of his students early one evening. The student, however, saw the tutor parking his car, and ran inside to inform his father that a double-glazing salesman was bothering residents further up the street, and should he tell him to go away when he called at their house?!

As mentioned previously, the general attitude of Hindu students towards their academic studies was very positive, and this has revealed itself in a variety of ways. However, this did not prevent students making critical observations about the college 'system'.

Niru, in a class discussion from February 1989, was critical of the steps lecturers took to try to enforce attendance and regular work.

1           Well, we're sixteen and we're supposed to look after our-  
2           selves. And for parents evening - we're supposed to make  
3           sure we do our own work. The college still treats us  
4           like kids. If they treat us like adults we'd act like  
5           adults . . . but they treat us like kids.  
6           I was just away for two days right . . . Thursday and  
7           Friday, and Monday I got a letter right . . . me parents  
8           got a letter right . . . saying I hadn't been attending.

The general plea in the beginning of this utterance (lines 1-5) could well be by any teenager. The contradiction here was that Niru had negotiated considerable freedom at college simply by attending part of classes; making profuse apologies to teachers; charming her way out of difficult situations, and generally being very adept at manipulating college rules. Yet, this freedom did not result in any major improvement in academic work.

The major problem is uncertainty about what constitutes being treated "like adults" (line 4). As a social member Niru perceives herself as being treated in an unnecessarily authoritarian way; or perhaps she is employing this argument as a general strategy of complaint against the college. There is no way of knowing exactly what she thought: although when considering how much freedom she negotiated it is difficult to understand how she could imagine the college as an authoritarian institution.

Amritlal was always very forthright in his comments about teaching staff, and often couched them in amusing terms. Both of the following extracts were taken from a class discussion in February 1989.

- 1           We 'ad this bible basher at school . . . he was deputy head
- 2           and he was always tryin' to convert us. You know Damian
- 3           Smith\*,<sup>13</sup> he was in trouble and he made him watch this
- 4           Christian video. (Laughter).

Amritlal's mastery of colloquial English is here evident. There is also an ethical judgement here in relation to the attempts to indoctrinate someone into religious belief. The amusing nature of the extract is created by the improbability of punishing a school pupil by showing him a religious video. Amritlal uses humour skillfully here to pass judgement on the process of religious indoctrination. Amritlal's sense of humour emerged also in the following extract:

- 1           You know Mr Jenkinly\*<sup>14</sup> ... I think he's . . . you know
- 2           he's short and when he talks to you he raises himself
- 3           up cos he feels inferior. I'm sure he feels inferior. He's
- 4           a pillock. He got ... he got me just for laughing ... no
- 5           smiling. We were walking towards the Engineering block and
- 6           we were just smiling and he said "Come here boy, you don't
- 7           smile round here". He's a nutter. He lifts himself right
- 8           up and looks you right in the eyes.

The reflective analysis (line 3) about the state of mind of Mr Jenkinly\* demonstrates considerable sophistication of thought on the part of Amritlal in the sense that he observes adult behaviour and reflects upon the psychological state which may motivate that behaviour. He also demonstrates considerable linguistic skill in moving from formal



expressions such as "I'm sure he feels inferior", to the use of informal expressions of the type used by students, such as "he's a pillock" (line 4).

The sophistication of Amritlal's oral linguistic ability is in contrast to his ability to write coherent prose. The following extract is from a piece of work on banking, written at about the same time as the extracts above were recorded.

... banks now offer free banking before banks use say if you stay in criedt and have £100 in your crirrent account then you could have free banking in this I wish help you understand this and tell a bit more on all the srvices that I have mantioned.

The extract is typical of Armitlal's ability to write prose and raises serious questions about his ability to progress through the formal education system.

The data from this chapter adds further dimensions to the students' perceptions of the educational system within the college and to their own aspirations.

There is no data in this chapter to suggest a modification of general statement (i) which was amended at the end of Chapter Four. There is further supporting data for the original statement (ii) because Balwant, like Hari, is fasting in order to improve his educational performance.

However, the nature of the data in this chapter suggests the sub-division of statement (ii). The first of these sub-divisions is:

- ii(a) The attainment of formal academic qualifications is an important motivating factor in student attitudes to the educational system.

Hari made it clear that his main purpose in remaining at college was to gain qualifications; and Balwant's sustained attempts to gain access to a GCSE/'O' level Mathematics class were motivated primarily by the desire to gain a qualification in that subject.

The treatment of education as a serious endeavour is emphasised in some cases by students who develop an apparently over-inflated sense of ambition and aspire to courses and qualifications for which they do not appear to be really suited. Rajesh was a clear example of this with his chart of various degrees to which he aspired; as also was Shanti with his aspiration of progressing directly to BTEC National. This hypothesis can be phrased as follows:

ii(b) Some Hindu students aspire to apparently unrealistic educational goals.

It was generally true of the student sample that they were eager to discuss the college, the education system in general, and their own academic progress. Although at times an individual may feel somewhat disillusioned about some aspect of his/her college career, the tendency is always to remain motivated towards success and to be willing to discuss their progress with teachers. This hypothesis can be phrased:

ii(c) Students are eager to discuss their educational progress with teachers.

There is no significant data to nullify statement (iii), but there is data which suggests that it could be amended. Towards the end of the chapter Niru accuses the college of treating students 'like kids', but this is only really in relation to her parents receiving letters from college giving details of her absence. Generally-speaking, Niru retained a fundamental aspect for education and for the gaining of qualifications, although this was obscured by a veneer of rebellious behaviour.

Amritlal too, in his comments on Mr Jenkinly\*, reveals a perceptive wit when it comes to criticising teaching staff whom he dislikes; but again, Amritlal tended to have a fundamental respect for the education system, even though the researcher suspected he had realised and come to terms with the facts of his own poor achievement.

It is therefore proposed not to change the wording of generalised statement (iii), but to note this potentially contrary evidence in case more substantial data appears later.

Statement (iv) does not appear to require amendment, but there is additional data in the form of evidence of the role played by parents and relatives. It seems clear that parents put a varying amount of pressure on their children, to try to achieve particular educational standards.<sup>15</sup> Narain describes how, when visiting the houses of relatives, he is frequently asked about his educational achievements. Shanti indicated how his father discouraged him from taking an apprenticeship and wanted him to continue with his formal college education. Finally, the data from Balwant shows how forceful can be parental pressure - in this case his father insisting that he do GCSE Mathematics, one way or another.

It seems reasonable to amend statement (iv) to include the element of parental pressure. Statement (iv) thus becomes:

Hindu students appear to prefer a formal, goal oriented education system, and this attitude is reinforced by the attitudes of parents and relatives.

There is no evidence to reject statement (v) but further data to support statement (vi). Hari makes it quite clear that educational standing is an important factor in terms of making a satisfactory arranged marriage.

There are two other pieces of data which although not extensive, appear worthy of formulating as generalisations. The justification for this is that on the basis of the researcher's background knowledge of Hinduism, it seems likely that both of these issues are reasonably widespread.

The first piece of data is that of Hari valuing his mother-tongue for the purpose of communicating with grandparents. This communication was clearly of great value to him. Generalisation (vii) thus becomes:

Hindu students value a knowledge of their spoken mother-tongue.

The final piece of data is that of Satya's apparent lack of ability to adapt to the modern working environment of a bank. This situation which was extensively discussed in the chapter, suggests a tentative generalisation, which may well be discarded if there is no further supporting evidence. This is, therefore, general statement (viii).

Complex linguistic deficiencies and problems of cultural adjustment can affect academic progress, and adjustment to the world of work.

The students in general, gave considerable thought to future careers and to gaining work experience. Many of them had part-time jobs. Data concerned with issues of vocational choice is considered next.



## CHAPTER 6 VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND THE WORLD OF WORK

A recurring theme in this research is of a group of students for whom both educational achievements and type of job gained are regarded as helping to sustain a particular level of social status. In addition, the students held a wide-variety of part-time jobs and although undoubtedly the financial rewards were important, the job clearly fulfilled social functions such as providing a culturally legitimate context in which to mix with members of the opposite sex. In the case of one particular student, Narain, there was an actual financial investment in a part-time career.

Narain was particularly noticeable because of his ostentatious and remarkably smart style of dress. He would come to college, for example, in an immaculate all-white suit, light pink shirt and black tie. His trousers would be pressed to a very sharp crease and the suit would be utterly unmarked. The researcher was always surprised how he managed to sustain this level of smartness in the hurly-burly of college life.

Several of the teachers would say to him, jokingly, that he looked like a film star and were rather taken aback when he replied that he did act in films. At first he was thought to be extending his imagination, but it was gradually realised that there was some substance in what he was saying and a very interesting story emerged.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | How did your acting come about?                            |
| 2  | Narain (N)     | I saw this advert in Indian Film Magazine and it cost      |
| 3  |                | ten pounds right to get screen test and get into the film. |
| 4  |                | So the first film was called <i>Chakkarbaz</i> . . .       |
| 5  | R              | What does that mean?                                       |
| 6  | N              | That means "dancer" . . . like in a show . . . "dancer"    |
| 7  |                | and I did it in the last summer holidays. There was        |
| 8  |                | this rape scene which I did, right, and it was             |
| 9  |                | filmed in the dark, because this is an Indian film,        |
| 10 |                | but that was cut because I was too young, and the actress  |
| 11 |                | was about twenty-six or seven. Anyway, now I am the son    |

12 of a villain . . . a kind of drug smuggler . . . but  
 13 the son doesn't know his father is bad and so it  
 14 is a good part.

15 R So did it just cost ten pounds? You didn't pay any more?  
 16 N It costs three hundred pounds for the first film, but  
 17 after that you pay nothing. They have offered me second  
 18 film and then I pay nothing. I get a percentage of the  
 19 profits and if it is a success I get lot of money. I am  
 20 under contract for next film, because they liked first  
 21 film and it is called *Kāli Duniya* . . . means like Black  
 22 World . . . all the drug taking and that sort of thing ...  
 23 and I paid money mostly out of college grant which I saved  
 24 so it doesn't cost me any money to pay three hundred  
 25 pounds.

26 R Whereabouts did you go to film?  
 27 N Walsall . . . there are studios . . . it is one of big  
 28 centres for Asian film.

29 R When will your first film be released? . . . has it  
 30 been released yet?  
 31 N Two years it will be released.  
 32 R Two years?  
 33 N This Easter holidays I must go finish some filming  
 34 and then it is finished. In summer holidays I start  
 35 next film and have a contract

36 R Well I find this absolutely fascinating . . . there will  
 37 not be many seventeen year olds who have done this  
 38 kind of thing and organised it. It's a real achievement  
 39 for you.

40 N Yes, I want go to Bombay and film there; but first  
 41 I must be in some films and get good roles.

At the beginning when the researcher first became aware of Narain's claim to involvement in acting, it was with some scepticism. However, he provided such detail, that even though staff never had any further evidence of his involvement, there seemed every likelihood that he was telling the truth.

Narain showed considerable initiative in saving his college grant to pay for filming fees. Many students either hand their termly cheque of perhaps one hundred pounds, to their parents; or spend it quickly on records or clothes. Narain was clearly motivated towards paying for his acting, and implicitly his parents must have supported him, as they had clearly not demanded the maintenance cheques for housekeeping expenses.

About one month later the researcher again asked Narain how his film and acting interests were developing.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Narain (N)     | I have got a new part . . . it is in English          |
| 2  |                | and I play Sayeed Jaffrey's son.                      |
| 3  | Researcher (R) | That's amazing. You've done really well. I think it's |
| 4  |                | incredible . . . you're going to be a film star.      |
| 5  | N              | It's called Eastern Promise and its about the Hindu   |
| 6  |                | community like and there is Sayeed Jaffrey and Rita   |
| 7  |                | Wolf in it. You know Rita Wolf, she is Indian and     |
| 8  |                | she is on television.                                 |
| 9  | R              | I'm not sure I know her.                              |
| 10 | N              | She is famous.  |
| 11 | R              | And will you actually get paid for this? Possibly you |
| 12 |                | will?   |
| 13 | N              | Yes, this one is free.                                |
| 14 | R              | You might get a contract.                             |
| 15 | N              | Yes, there will be a contract.                        |
| 16 | R              | And where is it being filmed?                         |
| 17 | N              | At the Star Studios in London. It's in English not    |
| 18 |                | Hindi, and it's about the Asian Community.            |

There is an interesting use of terminology on line 13 where Narain describes the filming as "free", signifying that he does not this time have to pay for the privilege of working. This is in response to a question asking if he will be paid.

Even though Narain is clearly captivated by the prospect of making films and of acting, he does not forget his commitment to education. Later in the same conversation he adds:

- 1

Researcher (R)

Do you think college will help you in any way to
- 2

be an actor?
- 3

Narain (N)

It's very important to be educated if you are to be an
- 4

actor right. Like Sayeed Jaffrey and Madhur Jaffrey you
- 5

know, they are very well known . . . they appear
- 6

in English productions . . . you have seen them . . . they
- 7

are very educated people and they are very successful.
- 8

R

Are there film schools where you can study? There are
- 9

colleges in London.
- 10

N

They not for Asian actors right. You can go to Walsall
- 11

and Wembley; they teach you acting; production; makeup;
- 12

and all these things. Diploma course is three months.
- 13

R

You have to pay for the course I suppose?
- 14

N

Yes pay (thinking). Sometimes, you know, actors help
- 15

young people. Raj Kapur . . . you know him . . .
- 16

he is a director, very famous man; he found this girl
- 17

Padmini Kolhapure when she was young, about eight
- 18

years, and helped her act and now she is number one
- 19

in all of India . . . number one actress.
- 20

And Amitab Bachan, you know, he was over here, he is
- 21

now MP and friend of Rajiv Gandhi ... like Ronald Reagan.
- 22

R

. . . going into politics.
- 23

N

He is very famous . . . very good actor.
- 24

R

I saw him when he was on TV on "Eastern Eye".
- 25

N

Yes he was, and he has good education. Very intelligent man.

In some ways one would have thought that a young person aspiring to an acting career would have rejected the notion of pursuing an academic education; but this is clearly not true of Narain. Throughout this discussion he continually talks of acting success in conjunction with the idea of being well-educated (lines 3 and 7 for example). In some ways this is more surprising than for students who aspire to a more conventional career -



in that case they would be expected to need and acquire further qualifications. In the case of Narain in this context, it is as if being educated is part of his overall concept of what it is to be a mature human being.

The researcher senses this because Narain offers no reasons why a formal education is essential to an acting career. Yet, again and again, in the dialogue, he returns to the same theme.

The story about the young actress (lines 16-19) appears to have been culled from a cinema magazine or perhaps the Indian popular press. An English teenager would also gather similar stories from film magazines, about their favourite stars, but it is very unlikely that the qualities which would attract them would be "good education" and "very intelligent" (line 25) as in the case of Amitab Bachan.

As an observer of Hindu culture it is fascinating for the researcher to hypothesise about the causes of this concern for education. It might have, for example, historical roots in the British and Muslim hegemonies in India, where more than usually, an education was a valuable asset in acquiring a prestigious job. Alternatively, it may have social origins in the caste hierarchy, or be a function of the politics of an immigrant group and the sense of striving for social and economic acceptability. Such speculation, however, though interesting, appears to be outside the brief of this particular methodology. As Leiter suggests:

It (the ethnomethodological problem) does not consist of providing causal explanations for patterned social action. Instead, we will deal with the ways members of society assemble settings and behaviours so as to create and sustain a sense of social order as it is experienced commonsensically.<sup>1</sup>

In order to monitor vocational aspirations the researcher sometimes asked students to draft out a career plan for when they had completed their CPVE year. This was in keeping with the researcher's view that any procedure should have valuable consequences for the students themselves. The researcher felt it useful for students to have an idea of the direction in which they hoped to move in terms of courses and jobs. Ratilal was ungraded at Mathematics CSE and obtained a Grade 4 in English - insufficient to progress to 'O' level English classes according to college regulations. He firstly described the courses to which he hoped to progress after his CPVE year.

- 1               Next year I want to do BTEC National Diploma in
- 2               Business and Finance and 1 'A' level; or 3 'A' levels
- 3               (2 year course). I then want to do a degree course
- 4               in Accounting (ACA sandwich course).

Perhaps the surprising thing here is that not only does he specify a degree course, but (line 4) he describes the actual type of accountancy qualification. This is in keeping with a research report from the FEU which albeit, generalised about the situation among all ethnic minority students:

The main reason for entering further education is to gain a chance (often a second chance for those who have not succeeded in the school system) of further qualifications and vocational education as a means to a career.

The black communities' interest in FE is not in leisure activities nor even in cultural activities related to community needs, but in recognised qualifications for vocational purposes.<sup>2</sup>

Ratilal went on to state his ambitions in terms of employment and general status:

- 1               I hope to be an ACA Chartered Accountant. I want
- 2               to work for a company and then be self-employed.

3 I want to tour round the world and drive a  
4 Ferrari.

What is striking about this list of ambitions is that it has considerable scope and breadth for a young man of very limited academic achievements. He does not simply 'want a good job'; but he sees a reasonable career route to involve working for a firm followed by self-employment. This career plan was written by Ratilal in December 1987.

Ratilal unfortunately proved to be a very poor attender on the CPVE programme. By Easter of 1988 he was scarcely attending classes at all and had not informed his tutors of any reasonable explanation. The researcher persuaded him to make an appointment for a discussion about his future. This conversation took place in June 1988:

1	Researcher (R)	What are your plans now? Have you decided
2		what to do next year?
3	Ratilal (Ral)	I think to do 'O' levels, and perhaps a jewellery
4		apprentice.
5	R	That's interesting. Why jewellery?
6	Ral	My father; he's jeweller. Gold and things.
7	R	Does he make jewellery, or does he have a shop?
8	Ral	He makes it. He is a goldsmith, but he also buys
9		ready-made from Birmingham and sells it.
10	R	Does he have a shop?
11	Ral	He had like workshop in last house, but now we've
12		just moved and we have grant to make shop.
13	R	Did your father follow this trade of goldsmith in
14		India?
15	Ral	Well he was a teacher and he was teacher here
16		too, but he always make jewellery and so he likes
17		to do that.
18	R	Would you train with your father?
19	Ral	He can get me apprenticeship in Birmingham in
20		a big firm. Then I learn all the things.
21	R	Will you have to pay for the training?
22	Ral	No, it is apprenticeship.

23 R When will you do this then?  
 24 Ral I don't know I am doing it. I want to do  
 25 'O' levels and 'A' levels, then I will see.  
 26 R Why do 'O' levels and 'A' levels when you want  
 27 to be a goldsmith? Why not start training straightaway?  
 28 Ral Because I really want to be civil airline pilot, and  
 29 you need the grades.  
 30 R Well if you don't mind my saying do you think  
 31 that is realistic? They are very selective for pilots ...  
 32 not just exam passes, but you have to have  
 33 really good health. How many 'O' levels have you got now?  
 34 Ral Haven't any.  
 35 R You might be better considering other things, although it  
 36 it is very good to have something to aim for.

In the intervening six months it is clear that Ratilal's analysis of his situation has not changed dramatically. The account which he is providing for the researcher still includes the twin notions of obtaining high academic qualifications and a prestigious job. There has been a transition from BTEC National and Accountancy to 'A' levels and a job as an airline pilot, but the way in which Ratilal documents his ambitions shows that a period of indifferent college attendance and attainment has not significantly transformed his self-perception.

The fact that Ratilal is able to sustain these ambitions in the face of evidence that the attainment of them is unlikely, indicates something of the nature of Hindu society and of Ratilal in particular. Presumably, the desire to attain a prestigious job is not merely a function of individual ambition, but reflects to some extent, a society (ie. Hindu society) in which such attainment is seen as important or desirable. Secondly, Ratilal is providing a documentary account of his ambitions for the researcher at this time - not for anyone else. He presumably includes these features of his ambitions because he feels that the researcher will understand, and probably approve of his aspirations. Ratilal probably has other ambitions (besides that of goldsmith) but has sought to represent these as a



reflection of what he sees as important in his life. It is difficult to demonstrate this, but it is possible that he actually does feel that his ambitions are unrealistic; but that this account is an attempt to describe to the researcher what he, Ratilal, feels are the essential elements of life which are important to him.

This accounting practice employed by Ratilal is important. As Leiter explains clearly:

When members of society tell ethnographies to each other in the form of verbal reports, they seek to communicate their understanding of events to each other. While they are communicating their understanding to others, they are simultaneously rendering the event observable and understandable to themselves.<sup>3</sup>

It is therefore quite conceivable that Ratilal, in describing what he would like to be the case, is doing so in the full realisation that its achievement is unlikely. However, he is employing his sense-making process to define for himself and for the researcher, that which has significance for him.

Even though his ambitions appeared unrealistic, there were admirable qualities in Ratilal's approach to life - notably a persistence and clinging to his own account of a worthwhile life. The ability to work hard and simply to keep going was a quality which emerged in a number of the students - one example being Purshottham.

He had been one of a group of students who, in January 1988, had booked to go on a short college residential course at a nearby outdoor pursuits centre. He arrived on the morning of departure only to say that he was unable to go. He said that he had been asked to work on Monday and Tuesday evenings and felt that he could not turn down the work.

The researcher was aware that he worked at an Indian restaurant and although somewhat sceptical about the excuse, felt that if true, Purshottham's family might need the money, and therefore his reason should be accepted and his deposit returned to him. The researcher took the opportunity later in the day to find out more about Purshottham's job.

- |    |                  |  |
|----|------------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R)   | You work in a restaurant don't you, Purshottham? Which   |
| 2  |                  | one is it?   |
| 3  | Purshottham (Pu) | Rajah on Elm St.   |
| 4  | R                | What do you do there? Serving on?                        |
| 5  | Pu               | Yeh, I'm a waiter.                                       |
| 6  | R                | You cook as well? (smiling).                             |
| 7  | Pu               | Yes, I <u>can</u> cook (smiling).                        |
| 8  | R                | What sort of place is it? Smart?                         |
| 9  | Pu               | Smart, yeh. It's on two floors.                          |
| 10 | R                | So you're working there tonight?                         |
| 11 | Pu               | Yeh, 'til six.   |
| 12 | R                | Six in the evening?                                      |
| 13 | Pu               | No, six o'clock tomorrow morning.                        |
| 14 | R                | No! (incredulously) - you don't finish at six in the     |
| 15 |                  | morning.   |
| 16 | Pu               | We do. Start at six tonight and then the restaurant      |
| 17 |                  | closes at three o'clock and we have to hoover and        |
| 18 |                  | clean the tables and all that stuff and finish about     |
| 19 |                  | half past five.  |
| 20 | R                | How about getting home?                                  |
| 21 | Pu               | There is transport.                                      |
| 22 | R                | But what about getting into college for 9.30? How do     |
| 23 |                  | you manage?  |
| 24 | Pu               | I'm just tired (smiling). We finished at 4.30 last night |
| 25 |                  | (a Sunday) and I was here at 9.30.                       |
| 26 | R                | Well I think you do marvellously. I hadn't realised      |
| 27 |                  | the hours were so long.                                  |
| 28 | Pu               | When you go to bed you just take two minutes and         |
| 29 |                  | then you're asleep. Instantly. I had a day off on        |
| 30 |                  | Saturday and I just slept all day. Didn't wake up.       |
| 31 | R                | Well, try and make sure you carry on with your studies.  |
| 32 |                  | You deserve a lot of credit for working so hard, and     |
| 33 |                  | I do want you to get on to BTEC General and then         |

34 National.  
 35 Pu Oh yes, I'm going to carry on. Definitely, I must do.  
 36 R If you get on to BTEC National you could go to the Poly-  
 37 technic and start a degree course. A student from last  
 38 year on CPVE is on BTEC National Business Studies this  
 39 year.  
 40 Pu Yes, Ramesh! I know him. I got him a job at the Rajah.  
 41 (smiling).  
 42 R So he works there too!

Early in the conversation (lines 4-7) the researcher was perhaps, quite unconsciously, a little condescending, for Purshottham is determined to define his status and competence. He does not, for example, accept the researcher's terminology of "serving on" but although clearly understanding it, redefines the term as "waiter". The researcher asked the question 'You cook as well?' rather expecting Purshottham to answer in the negative, since the researcher thought that normally only regular staff were employed as cooks. In retrospect the question does seem mildly condescending as it carries an implication that the researcher does not think it likely that Purshottham will be able to cook.

Purshottham clearly identifies with this possibility in the question and skillfully confirms that he is perfectly able to cook while ignoring the more straightforward understanding of the question as to whether in fact he helps to prepare meals in the restaurant.

The case with which shorthand accounts can rapidly convey a wealth of detail is illustrated by the researcher asking if the Rajah restaurant is "smart" (line 8). For the researcher, this word signifies a combination of sophisticated, expensive, frequented by wealthy professional or business people, having a fairly extensive menu, served in a stylish manner, in expensively-decorated ethnic environment. Purshottham doesn't feel the need to ask for such a detail of description but simply accepts the definition "smart" (line 9). Of course, it may be that the mental pictures represented by the adjective 'smart' are not identical in both the researcher and Purshottham. The important issue,

however, is that this representation of the social world is acceptable and meaningful to both members. Their social accounts are congruent and these render the world intersubjectively meaningful ensuring that the social world makes sense to the researcher and to Purshottham as members.

The main section of the dialogue which reveals the very long hours being worked by Purshottham surprises the researcher. Although Purshottham is the first to mention the length of the working hours he only does so incidentally (line 11) and does not appear to wish to draw attention to the fact. The issue of the excessively long hours being worked by Purshottham indicates the hidden world of the Hindu student. The hours are so excessive that they could never normally have been imagined by the researcher or probably by other teaching staff.

A commitment to education is later revealed by Purshottham. The researcher is urging him to continue with his studies in spite of the very long hours he is working (lines 31-34) and Purshottham replies that he is going to carry on; that he "must do" (line 35). The word "must" is indexical to the setting and derives most of its meaning from that social context. The researcher understands Purshottham to be saying, not that there is some external imperative which is forcing him to continue, and which is giving him no choice, rather that he has some intrinsic imperative which is urging him on to further his education. The researcher hears Purshottham as saying that he is part of some inexorable process leading onwards to the completion of his education. This attitude towards education recurs again and again, not only in this study, but in others of the Asian community in general. In a study by L Cohen and L Manion, Asians were:

felt to be supportive of school, keen on education, and their children were viewed as likely to persevere in acquiring some kind of school or work qualifications.<sup>4</sup>



An integral part of the CPVE programme was the work experience period of three-weeks duration. One of the tutors tried to find placements for all students, but many of the Hindu students were able to arrange their own placements by using their part-time or Saturday jobs. Subhash was very enthusiastic about working in business and commerce and was following the Business Studies option on the course. When asked about his work placement in January 1988 he replied:

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Subhash (S)    | I work at Woolworths on Saturdays and I'm going there.      |
| 2  |                | Mary Robinson* says she'll show me the accounts and book-   |
| 3  |                | keeping.  |
| 4  | Researcher (R) | Who is she?   |
| 5  | S              | Section leader. She looks after all the tills and that's    |
| 6  |                | where I work.   |
| 7  | R              | So you asked if you could go there as your work experience? |
| 8  | S              | They said I could.  |
| 9  | R              | What about pay? Are they going to pay you?                  |
| 10 | S              | I don't think so because they are training me.              |

The final utterance shows considerable maturity. Many of the students taught by the researcher on the CPVE programme were very motivated by a desire to earn money. In this case, it appears as if Subash has evaluated the moral obligations on both sides, and the researcher hears the utterance as Subhash having not yet asked about pay, but come to the conclusion that on balance, it is not reasonable to expect payment. There is the assumption that Subhash feels he is not filling a real vacancy and although he will clearly be doing some productive work, this is essentially for his own benefit and only incidentally for the benefit of Woolworths.

The researcher spoke again to Subhash once he had completed his three weeks work experience.

1	Researcher (R)	Did they give you lots of things to do?
2	Subhash (S)	They did. They let me do all the computer ordering.
3		See it flashes up on the screen when they need to order
4		something ... so I did that. It's only a small computer.
5	R	That sounds very good experience.
6	S	And I started off on sweets, but they let me go round all
7		the departments. I did about three days in each department
8	R	And you work there, don't you, on Saturdays?
9	S	Yes, it's good.
10	R	But they didn't pay you during work experience?
11	S	No, but they gave me a gift voucher at the end.
12	R	And what about jobs there in the future? Do you think
13		there is a chance?
14	S	They have no vacancies now, but I think I'll have
15		a good chance if one comes up. See all the section
16		heads are women and they was all Saturday lasses.
17		They've been there ten years . . . so you can get on.
18	R	And are you interested in Distribution as a career?
19	S	Yes (smiling). I'd go back now, if I could.
20	R	And do your parents think it's a good idea?
21	S	Yeh, they do.

Subhash's utterance describing working at Woolworths as "good" (line 9) is a typically indexical statement. Other than it being a broadly positive statement about the experience of working in that store, there is little intrinsic meaning in the use of the word. The latter derives its sense from the setting: that is from what Subhash has said on this and previous occasions, and from what the researcher knows or assumes to be the case about working at Woolworths.

Subhash appears to apply the adjective "good" primarily to the experience of working on Saturdays, and the researcher understands this as signifying an interesting and stimulating working environment, good social life, reasonable pay and work of at least an adequate interest level. The researcher also understands the experience gained using the computer and in working in a range of different departments to have contributed to the enthusiasm shown by Subhash.

An interesting aspect of many conversational exchanges, and a phenomenon which is highlighted within the interpretive paradigm, is that meanings are often not fully explicated. An example is when Subhash notes (commencing line 15), "See all the section heads are women and they was all Saturday lasses". The researcher does not comment further on this but understands Subhash to be saying that as all the section heads commenced as part-time staff, there are clear promotion routes for those who start as casual or part-time staff, and even that the company policy may be not to recruit directly for section head staff.

The other dimension to this utterance is that Subhash was sufficiently perceptive to note that all the section heads were in fact women, and also to find out that they all started by being Saturday workers. Presumably the discovery of the latter entailed a certain amount of detective work.

The connection of this information with his own employment prospects, "so you can get on", (line 17) indicates a considerable degree of sophistication in relation to the world of work.

In December 1987, Laxmi completed a written account of her career ambitions. Part of this is as follows:

1	My future plans is to do something with Business, opening
2	a business. After CPVE course, I am hoping to go on
3	BTEC National, if I pass my Maths and English and
4	also CPVE, which may take two years then if I pass
5	my BTEC National, then I will have to go further doing
6	a Diploma, then after that if I thing I should go further
7	I'll go further if not, I'll like to help my dads in his
8	job if not in the future I like to have my own business
9	with my brother with a famous factory and shops with
10	a popular name like Boss, Dr Unger.

This account possesses many of the characteristics of the conversation with Ratilal and others, including, for example, the emphasis upon gaining qualifications and being successful in business. Laxmi's father was in fact a successful and wealthy businessman and no doubt he constituted something of a role model.

A predominant theme in this extract is that of deferred gratification. Laxmi is planning for her future and quite clearly accepts that there may be some considerable time lag until her plans come to fruition. She notes that it "may take two years" (line 4) and the word "future" occurs twice (lines 1 and 8). Another recurring phrase which sheds some light on the same theme is "go further" (lines 5, 6 and 7). The researcher interprets this phrase as exemplifying what he takes to be the forward thinking, dynamic, progressive aspect of the Hindu community. This, the researcher feels, is demonstrated in the urge to acquire qualifications and to achieve upward social mobility through education and employment.

It is in interpretations such as this that the researcher is interacting reflexively with the account given by Laxmi. As a social member Laxmi selects certain aspects of her ambitions in order to produce an account which is sense-ible to her and she hopes to the researcher. The researcher, on the other hand, sees this account in a particular setting, which is partly composed of what he knows about Laxmi, but also depends for meaning to a considerable extent, upon his background knowledge of many individual Hindus and the Hindu community in general. Laxmi's account is therefore reflexive. It arises out of the social setting of her experience, but depends for meaning upon the interpretations of others, upon the immediate setting and the wider setting of Hindu society.

The enthusiasm and dynamism of Subash was evident in other students in the sample, and particularly in the case of Ramila who was a very lively and extrovert girl. She was very confident in her inter-personal skills and spoke to staff as if they were student



friends. A typical exchange occurred in February 1988 when Ramila entered the staffroom one morning:

Researcher	Hello, Ramila.
Ramila	Y'all right then.

There was an amusing familiarity about her style of speaking which somehow was not inappropriate or too familiar. She appeared to have an underlying respect for the staff, yet on a superficial level this was not obvious. Her ability to communicate effectively was demonstrated by the way in which she arranged her own work experience placement.

1	Researcher (R)	Have you fixed up your work experience yet?
2	Ramila (Rm)	Yeh, I'm goin' to a bank.
3	R	Are you (surprised). They're very difficult to get into.
4		They're very choosy.
5	Rm	There was this woman from the bank giving
6		a talk upstairs and after I went and asked her
7		if she'd take me.
8	R	A careers talk?
9	Rm	Yeh, and she said yeh, and she would check and
10		they'd write to the Head of Department, so I'm goin'.

Ramila treats life in a very matter-of-fact manner. When the researcher pays her an implied compliment (lines 3, 4) by saying how difficult it is to get a place in a bank, Ramila does not respond in any way, but simply relates in a straightforward manner how she arranged the placement.

Ramila's direct style of speech is also demonstrated in a short conversational extract recorded in February 1988. Ramila was staying behind at the end of college to prepare

for her Young Enterprise programme in the evening. She was going to accompany a female teacher to buy supplies and raw materials for the evening's manufacturing activities.

- |   |                |   |
|---|----------------|---|
| 1 | Researcher (R) | What do you do Ramila?                      |
| 2 | Ramila (Rm)    | Production manager.                         |
| 3 | R              | Do you keep all the lads hard at work then? |
| 4 | Rm             | They need it. I tell 'em what to do.        |
| 5 | R              | Do you enjoy Young Enterprise?              |
| 6 | Rm             | Yeh, it's great.                            |

From time to time, the researcher taught Ramila in class, and there is no doubt that she was very assertive towards boys and that her utterance (line 4) describing her attitude to the boys on Young Enterprise is an accurate statement.

Within her class group Ramila was accepted, along with her assertive personality, by the other students. They did not regard her as in any way different, and in her absence, for example, there were no attempts to ridicule her. Ramila had constructed a particular role for herself within the class, and this was accepted by the other Hindu students as being an acceptable gender role variation. Interestingly enough, this assertive role was also accepted by the indigenous students and most-notably by the Muslim boys, who probably would not have accepted such an assertive personality in a Muslim girl. Indeed, it would have been extremely unusual, from the researchers experience, for a Muslim girl to demonstrate assertive-ness to the degree shown by Ramila.

It was interesting to contrast the situation with regard to vocational aspirations in this country and that in India. In this respect Satya provided a wide range of interesting anecdotes.

1	Researcher (R)	What sort of jobs are there for people round
2		your village?
3	Satya (Sty)	You can go work for these rich peoples. You go . . .
4		they have maybe sixty acres . . . and you
5		go take one or two fields. You look after paddy
6		and plant rice. Then at end of month they give
7		you rice . . . bag of rice . . . and some monies.
8		Maybe twenty pounds that month. Then you
9		can work more or go work for another rich man.
10	R	What about factories? Are there any factories?
11	Sty	No, no factories there - just rice mill. You can
12		work. They take brown off rice and it fall down
13		white. Then some they work at temple - they
14		do these jobs. Not much money . . . maybe five
15		pounds for one month. They clean temple and
16		things.

While describing the situation in India, Satya would often frown or pull his mouth to one side as if disdainful of the opportunities in Indian villages. He frequently appeared torn between the emotions of homesickness for India and a quiet despair at the contrast between the opportunities in England and those in his homeland. In October 1988 the researcher asked Satya about his own job aspirations if he had remained in India.

1	Researcher (R)	What job would you have got?
2	Satya (Sty)	I get degree. Then maybe I get job . . . but
3		not many jobs in India. These people no
4		get jobs and kill themselves. This boy he
5		go one night and lie on railway line and
6		train come and cut off his head.
7	R	Was he from your village?
8	Sty	Yes, he was twenty maybe. He was getting
9		married and he not got job, so people poke
10		fun at him and he get upset. So he kill
11		himself.

One day during the following month Satya was absent from class one morning and in the afternoon the researcher asked him to explain his absence.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Were you absent this morning?                          |
| 2  | Satya (Sty)    | I was at interview sir. I am getting job.              |
| 3  | R              | Oh, I'm sorry you're leaving. When are you going?      |
| 4  | Sty            | Just job in evening sir . . . Phisband* at             |
| 5  |                | Jackson Bridge*. I only work evening time.             |
| 6  | R              | Oh I see . . . I know the place. I think Rajinder      |
| 7  |                | works there too. Is it a packing job?                  |
| 8  | Sty            | Yes packing. We all work there. Lots of our people go. |
| 9  | R              | When you say 'our people' you mean the Telugu-speaking |
| 10 |                | Hindus.  |
| 11 | Sty            | Yes, sir.  |
| 12 | R              | How many work there then?                              |
| 13 | Sty            | About nine people.                                     |
| 14 | R              | And you are packing . . . do you do anything else?     |
| 15 | Sty            | We must get down boxes and take them to lorries        |
| 16 |                | and pack them in. That's it, I think.                  |

The assumption (line 7) that the job would be a packing job was based upon the researcher's knowledge of that particular employer and the part-time work which was available.

When Satya speaks of 'our people' (line 8) he was understood to be talking of the Telugu-speaking Hindus. The researcher did not assume he was talking about ethnic minority students in general, nor Asian students, nor Hindu students, but assumed he was referring to Telugu-speaking Hindus primarily because Satya had spoken before about the specific social and linguistic problems faced by this cultural minority. The researcher assumed that Satya would reserve the term 'our people' for his particular cultural sub-group.



It was probably a procedural error to suggest to Satya that this indeed was what he meant. It would have been a more refined question to ask Satya to whom he was referring when he said 'our people'. There is always the distinct possibility that students will agree with the teacher when the latter includes a reasonable response within the context of a question.

Satya's response, however, appears to have been an accurate one, since when asked how many of his countrymen work there, he replies 'nine' (line 13). The researcher was certain that the evening shift was much larger than this, and indeed that there would be far more than nine Asian people working there. It therefore seems reasonable that Satya was referring to the Telugu-speaking Hindus only.

The use of the phrase 'our people' is, of course, indexical - not only to this particular conversation but also to the wider context of discourse and understanding between Satya and the researcher.

Niru frequently spoke of her part-time work at MacDonalds. In May 1989 she recounted some of the pressures of the job:

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Niru           | It's really bad sometimes . . . like Saturday afternoon. |
| 2  |                | You 'ave six burgers in each hand and you lay            |
| 3  |                | twelve on the grill and then twelve more and             |
| 4  |                | you're turning them and they're yelling for them.        |
| 5  |                | A've been burned all over (gesturing to her forearms).   |
| 6  | Researcher (R) | On the grill?  |
| 7  | Niru           | Yeh, and the buns - that's impossible. You garnish       |
| 8  |                | all the buns and you can't keep up . . . and             |
| 9  |                | they make you sell more like they ask for                |
| 10 |                | cheeseburger and fries and you say 'Would that           |
| 11 |                | be large fries sir?' You're supposed to push the         |
| 12 |                | product.   |
| 13 | R              | They get you to sell more.                               |
| 14 | Niru           | When you take the order "Is that a big shake?".          |

Niru presents a graphic account of the pressures of work on Saturdays, and her description is epitomised by the phrases "that's impossible" (line 7) and "you can't keep up" (line 8).

It is interesting that Niru contrasts this account with an analysis of the way in which the employer tries to encourage sales assistants to sell larger portions of the products. Niru first reveals this strategy when she says "and they make you sell more" (line 9).

The researcher understands Niru to be complaining of this practice. He understands this because firstly she juxtaposes the policy with a previous account of how busy the restaurant becomes on Saturdays. This introduces a sense of irony. Secondly, Niru's tone when describing the process was one of sarcasm about the system, and she adopted a particularly ironical tone when she said "Would that be large fries sir?" (line 11).

The researcher understands Niru to be saying that she appreciates her position within the economic framework of society - that she sees herself as a component of the capitalist system, but at the same time that she does not mind too much, because there are aspects of the work which she clearly enjoys.

When she says 'You're supposed to push the product' she clearly understands her own economic relationship with MacDonalds, but never in the dialogue does she explicitly criticise this relationship, never, for example, describing it as an exploitative relationship.

Although Niru clearly felt that she worked extremely hard at MacDonalds, she exhibited considerable tolerance in talking about another student who worked there with her, but who she (and the remainder of the class) felt was generally incapable.

1	Researcher (R)	What does he do there?
2	Niru	He just can't cope. (Said in a sing-song, laughing voice)
3	R	Does he cook?
4	Niru	He does (voice as above).
5	R	But + + +
6	Niru	He's been there quite a while like . . . but he
7		has to do easy jobs like clean tables or the till
8		'cos he can't handle customers, and we can't put
9		him in regular grill or anything like that 'cos
10		you've got six pieces of meat on each grill and its really
11		hard so I don't know how he would cope if he got on there.

Part of Niru's stock of knowledge is to understand work in terms of "coping" (lines 2 and 11). She replies to a question asking what the student does, by replying that he "can't cope" (line 2). Niru says this in a high-pitched laughing voice which the researcher interprets as signifying that the student in question is fairly incompetent at most of the necessary skills, but that for some reason this incompetence does not incur the anger or disdain of the other student workers. The researcher assumes that because of personality factors the student is well-liked, and that this is seen as more important than his incompetence.

Niru has clearly developed a particular typification of an individual who cannot work effectively within the context of a fast-food restaurant. This particular student clearly fits this typification. Schutz explains this in general terms:

The vernacular of everyday life is primarily a language of named things and events and any name includes a typification and generalisation referring to the relevant system prevailing in the linguistic in-group which found the named thing significant enough to provide a separate term for it.<sup>5</sup>

For Niru it is important to "cope" at MacDonalds. She associates herself with the job and with the firm. So much so, that she uses the expression "we can't put him in

regular grill" (lines 8/9). The "we" indicates to the researcher that Niru perceives herself as part of the administrative and decision-making hierarchy. This may well be true at weekends, when clearly the restaurant is largely staffed by part-timers.

The other aspect of this extract is that Niru uses the American idiom of "regular", which signifies to the researcher that she relates closely with the MacDonalds presentational image.

As part of a classroom discussion in May 1989 Niru demonstrated considerable social awareness when talking about the position of married women working long and variable hours at MacDonalds.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Many people work extremely hard in service industries.    |
| 2  | Niru           | Like we have women at MacDonalds with kids and            |
| 3  |                | they do the night shift and then they have to be          |
| 4  |                | there for six the next morning.                           |
| 5  | R              | Do you overhear them talking about the problems they      |
| 6  |                | have about this?  |
| 7  | Niru           | Yeh, they have to have a babysitter and drop the          |
| 8  |                | child off at six o'clock in the evening or six o'clock    |
| 9  |                | in the morning.   |
| 10 | R              | And how old are these ladies?                             |
| 11 | Niru           | About twenty.   |
| 12 | R              | Do they talk about how they feel about it?                |
| 13 | Niru           | They're not really too keen on it and that.               |
| 14 | R              | How do you react to them? Do you feel sorry for them?     |
| 15 | Niru           | Yeh.  |
| 16 | R              | Would you like to be in their position when you're older? |
| 17 | Niru           | No a wouldn't. Like some of them have a job in            |
| 18 |                | the daytime and then come to MacDonalds in                |
| 19 |                | the evening. And you can't be sure you'll get home        |
| 20 |                | at twelve. Like we close at midnight but you can't        |
| 21 |                | be certain you'll be home by one o'clock, or maybe if     |
| 22 |                | you've something on it'll be two or three in the morning. |



Niru demonstrates considerable social concern and empathy for other human beings in this extract (line 2). From the researcher's opening statement it would have been possible for Niru to focus entirely on her own hard work and the difficulties she encountered with working unsocial hours. She does, however, immediately recount the difficulties experienced by some of the married women workers at MacDonalds.

Niru works long hours herself and she has understood what it feels like to work long, unsocial hours. The effects of this kind of work pattern have become part of her stock of knowledge. She is applying this stock of knowledge to the situation of married female workers. In addition, Niru is the eldest of several brothers and sisters. She has at least one younger brother and one younger sister. It is also therefore part of her stock of knowledge that young children bring responsibilities and that parents must make arrangements for their welfare. She again applies this stock of knowledge to the necessity to make baby-minding arrangements (line 7).<sup>6</sup>

The students in this sample thus have some well-defined methods for understanding the nature of work in society and making sense of how to structure a career within the constraints of their own abilities and the influences brought to bear upon them by parents and their cultural community. These methods often inter-relate with members methods to make sense of the academic world of the college.

At the beginning of this chapter, the data of Narain in relation to his aspiration to be a film actor, reinforces the suggestion that academic qualifications are an important motivating factor and thus supports generalisation ii (a). The evidence of Ratilal in wanting to become a chartered accountant after completing 'A' levels supports generalisation ii (b). His wish to "tour round the world" and "drive a Ferrari" supports generalisation vi.

Ratilal's general aspiration to high status jobs such as accountant and airline pilot suggests that it would be appropriate to amend generalisation ii (b) to include a reference to vocation. Generalisation ii (b) thus becomes:

ii(b) Some Hindu students aspire to unrealistic educational and vocational goals.

It is important to recognise however, that exactly what is 'unrealistic' in relation to vocational goals, must be a subjective judgement on the part of the researcher. Genuine ambition must at times involve striving for the apparently unattainable. The issue is complex, and apparent over-aspiration may in say Ratilal's case be accounted for by his simply not being aware of the entry requirements for an airline pilot.<sup>7</sup>

One aspect of the students in the sample which has not been noted yet, is the general quality of persistence which is demonstrated, particularly in relation to pursuing educational and vocational goals. Narain, in spending his grant on his acting ambitions, demonstrates this. Ratilal, too, in persisting with his ambitions, in the face of considerable evidence that he simply did not possess the academic ability. Finally, Purshottham, in his capacity to work extremely hard and yet still sustain his attendance at college, after a night of work at the restaurant. This personal quality is difficult to define, but it involves a sense of the capacity to defer rewards, and to work hard now for long term goals. Not only is there the sense of having long-term aims, but also of the capacity to sustain a long period of hard work in their achievement.<sup>8</sup> This quality seems worthy of stating as a new generalisation:

ix Hindu students demonstrate the capacity to define long-term educational and vocational goals, and to show sustained hard work and determination in order to try to achieve those goals.

This generalisation is further supported by the evidence of Subhash in analysing what he perceived as the long-term staffing patterns of Woolworths, in order to plan his likely appointment to a full-time post and subsequent promotion. Laxmi, also, in her written account of her career ambitions demonstrates a sophisticated range of long-term aims. Ramila, in arranging her own work placement in a bank, demonstrates an aspect of generalisation ix, but there appears to be a significantly different dimension here, involving a dynamic, innovative capacity to make one's way in the world, and create advantageous situations. Ramila demonstrates this quality, as does Narain in arranging his involvement in the film industry. It seems reasonable to suggest a new generalisation involving this positive psychological characteristic.

- x Hindu students can display a dynamic, innovatory style in the pursuit of short-term vocational goals.

Hindu students thus treat the issue of becoming established in a career very seriously indeed, and they show the capacity to plan ahead in order to achieve vocational aims. An important issue for many Hindu young people is that of racial discrimination in the job market and elsewhere, and this is the next issue to be considered.

## CHAPTER 7 RACE AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

In discussing race and racial issues with the students there were a number of methodological problems. The most significant one arose from the interpretive procedure adopted by the researcher, resulting in the assumption that racial issues would be a sensitive subject for respondents to discuss, and consequently that such issues should only be raised in a carefully-considered manner.

Interpretive procedures are commonsense assumptions which are created by the individual from the stock of knowledge at hand. As this stock of knowledge is continually being amended and being added to, interpretive procedures are also being changed to fit new circumstances.

The researcher had questioned in himself this particular interpretive procedure, but had always found evidence from student behaviour in general, which supported the contention that many were reluctant to discuss the issue of race. Perhaps it would be more accurate to suggest that students in general appear reluctant to discuss issues of race until they feel they know and are confident in the presence of the social member concerned.

The researcher always assumed this interpretive stance in relation to the student sample, and yet, it must be admitted, this attitude may not have been necessary. Moreover, it may have reflexively created in the students, a sensitivity and shyness about the issue which was not originally present.

Thus, the researcher always considered it undesirable to mention the subject of racial discrimination first, without any kind of prompt or related comment from the student which might provide a "lead-in" within the conversation. This was often very limiting



and resulted in the researcher sometimes not mentioning issues or problems when he considered them important.

On occasion, he felt it less threatening (to himself also) to mention racial issues in a group situation - in class for example. This allowed those students who did not wish to discuss the topic to opt out of the discussion, and further, if it was clear that no-one wished to engage in debate, it was fairly easy when working with a group, for the researcher to gloss over the subject and move onto another topic.

Finally, the researcher was conscious not to offend students and particularly not to cause them to return home and talk to parents or relatives about a lecturer asking pointed questions about discrimination. The researcher, as lecturer, was anxious to avoid adverse feedback coming to college. The research justification for this was one which permeated the entire research programme - that of collecting data - with the minimum of disruption to the ecology of the college.

The issue of the degree of priority to give to the professional role of teacher as opposed to the role of researcher is complex and raises many ethical issues. R Winter has commented upon this:

Ethical guidelines for the process are therefore proposed by writers on action-research in order to ensure that the activities of inquiry are compatible with other professional responsibilities, ie. that the investigative process is not at any point consciously exploitative or destructive. This is the familiar issue as to whether 'the end justifies the means'. Is a teacher at liberty to teach a class badly in order to test an educational hypothesis? The answer must be, No: teachers are required ethically to give their prior professional responsibility to the effectiveness of learning.<sup>1</sup>

The first occasion on which the subject of discrimination arose was in conversation with Narain during a lunchtime in March 1987.

1	Researcher (R)	When you left school you did not have
2		to carry on with education. You could
3		have gone on a YTS scheme or tried for
4		a job. Why did you decide to come to
5		college?
6	Narain (N)	People at work might not be very nice, you
7		know, and at college you can trust the
8		teachers and they are always very nice
9		and help you a lot.
10	R	I know what you mean. Sometimes at
11		work people may be short-tempered . . .
12		but you find teachers helpful? I'm very
13		pleased to hear that (smiling).
14	N	Teachers are very nice, so I prefer
15		education. Also I might do YTS a long
16		time and try to get a job and not get one.
17	R	Yes, but YTS is quite successful in finding work.
18	N	I might not get job because I am Indian, and
19		and I would have wasted a lot of time.
20	R	You mean discrimination . . . well, it is possible.
21		You haven't come across instances in college where
22		you feel discriminated against?
23	N	No. College teachers very nice. People at work very
24		hard . . . not in college.

This is a very interesting linguistic exchange from an interpretive point of view. The conversation opens with the researcher generally probing for reasons to explain Narain's continuation with education, rather than opting for a job or a training scheme.

Narain responds with a typically indexical statement - explaining that he has chosen college because people in the workplace may "not be very nice" (line 6). "Nice" is indexical because its sense is equivocal. The researcher understands its sense because people at the workplace are juxtaposed with teachers, and the qualities of the latter are described in terms of "trust" (line 7) and "help" (line 9). The researcher thus

understands Narain to be describing typical workers in industry or commerce as not very "helpful" to him or that they cannot be "trusted". These words are of course themselves indexical and the researcher understands Narain to be saying that teachers are supportive and assist students with career developments. Also, he understands Narain to be assessing the reliability of teachers in terms of giving, say, career advice. Teachers can be relied upon. They offer independent advice. Narain contrasts these qualities with those he implies he has encountered in the work situation.

The researcher also takes into account the context of Narain's personality when he interprets and assigns meaning to the word "nice" (line 6). Narain, although talkative and a good communicator, was rather sensitive in his relations with other students. He tended to be solitary and did not have a particular circle of friends. The researcher thus understood Narain to be saying that his experiences of people in the workplace sometimes indicated that they could be sharp and harsh in their communicative style.

In his next utterance (line 14) Narain reiterates his favourable impression of teachers, but then gives a reason which in terms of explaining why he does not wish to take up a YTS placement, does not appear to be very logical. He suggests that he may try for a long time to obtain a job, but be unsuccessful. The researcher (line 17) indicates that Narain's reason does not really match the evidence.

Finally (line 18) Narain reveals his real thinking on the issue. He has established in his own mind that discrimination is more prevalent in the workplace, than at college. In fact, in response to a direct question from the researcher, Narain affirms that he has not come across any examples of discrimination in college (line 23). It is here that he provides his own sense of the word "nice". He clearly uses it to signify that an individual is unlikely to act in a discriminatory manner. It is at this stage that the researcher fully understands the significance of the entire conversation.



It seems likely that Narain from the very beginning of the conversation (line 6) was trying to indicate his fears about discrimination, but was either too shy or lacking in confidence to immediately mention the issue directly, or was uncertain about how to actually describe how he felt. It may also have been that he lacked confidence about the kind of response his statements might elicit from the researcher. The latter explanation may be rather unlikely, in view of Narain's comments about teachers, and the fact that he did, a few sentences later, actually specify his concerns.

Narain has thus constructed a rule about discrimination. The rule is that discrimination (against him) is much more likely to take place at work than at college. This rule is not an objective rule which exists independently in a reified society, and which causes Narain to conform and continue with his education. It is a construction by Narain which helps him to understand his empirical observations, and to state these to himself in a way which makes sense of the social world. The rule is also a mechanism for expressing to other social members what Narain sees as the orderly and factual features of the workplace and of college. Other social members may adopt the same rule; they may amend it; they may test it against their own experience. They, in their turn, will construct a rule which will be the announcement of the significance of their own actions for the benefit of other members. As Zimmerman writes:

Reference to rules might then be seen as a common sense method of accounting for or making available for talk the orderly features of everyday activities, thereby marking out these activities as orderly in some fashion.<sup>2</sup>

One final dimension in relation to this dialogue concerns the extent of discrimination on YTS schemes. While Narain does not explicitly use the term "YTS" in this dialogue it is possible that he had heard of discriminatory experiences of others while on a scheme. In fact, during the early 1980's it became apparent that the 1976 Race Relations Act did



not relate to work experience programmes which were part of YTS schemes. In an evaluation of the influence of the 1976 Act on education and training, Andrew Dorn records that:

In 1983 the Secretary of State made a designation order under Section 13 of the Act, so as to safeguard trainees at the point of entry to, and dismissal from, work experience. Yet the law still does not cover the treatment of trainees within the work experience situation.<sup>3</sup>

It is possible then that Narain's reluctance to actively seek work as opposed to continuing at college, may have been influenced by stories circulating within the Asian community about discrimination on YTS schemes. Dorn also adds:

There is some concern that black school-leavers are being shunted into those YTS courses that are least likely to lead to employment, ie. Mode B non-employer-based schemes.<sup>4</sup>

The Mode A schemes were operated by employers, who often provided both the on-the-job and off-the-job training. These could be regarded as providing a better chance of resultant employment because of the close contact with an employer. However, the Mode B schemes were organised by community groups, for example, which were not necessarily direct employers.

On some occasions it was extraordinarily difficult to induce students to talk about racial discrimination. In October 1987 the researcher arranged to teach a CPVE group which he knew to be multi-racial in constitution. The intention was to raise the subject of discrimination with a view to encouraging student discussion. The group was composed of two Afro-Caribbean students, seven Muslim students, six English students and two Hindu students (Subhash and Laxmi). The lesson was introduced by mentioning the general subject of discrimination, and inter-racial conflict. In order to introduce the

notion that it was not necessarily an issue connected with skin colour, the researcher mentioned the then current conflict in Sri Lanka where the Indian army had moved on a large scale against Tamil militants. There was some interesting feedback from the Muslim students, but Subhash and Laxmi said nothing. The researcher divided the students up for group work. This was recorded in field notes at the time:

I divided them into groups and asked them to reflect on the consequences of racial discrimination for society, and record their views on an overhead transparency. This was really very poorly done. Both Subhash and Laxmi acted as the scribe for their respective groups - and I didn't hear them contribute a single opinion or say anything other than to do the writing - which they both did indifferently with poor spelling and many mistakes.

The only contribution made by Subhash was to write on a list of consequences of discrimination "taking the piss".

The researcher understood this last phrase to signify that some people or students would poke fun at Hindu students, using racist<sup>5</sup> jibes as a source of humour.

Subhash and Laxmi were normally talkative students and their silence, being unusual and uncharacteristic, clearly signified something. The researcher interpreted this in the sense that the subject of discrimination was of major concern to them, and that for some reason unknown, they felt unable to discuss the subject in a relaxed manner in that particular classroom context.

During the following week there was an interesting sequel to these classroom events. Subhash approached the researcher on the corridor and asked him to sign those CPVE competencies which signified that he appreciated some of the issues connected with racism and discrimination.<sup>6</sup>

The researcher used the opportunity to start a discussion on discrimination and this time Subhash was much more forthcoming.

1 Researcher (R) Tell me what you think about racial discrimination.  
2 Is it fairly widespread? Have you come across it  
3 much?  
4 Subhash (S) Sometimes like they come in the shop . . .  
5 English people . . . 'cos my parents have a  
6 shop . . . and they say things . . . they  
7 say we don't serve them right and we do.  
8 R It must be very unpleasant and I would  
9 never behave like that . . .  
10 S Oh no, it only say like twenty per cent of  
11 English people, if that . . . and most are  
12 just ordinary.  
13 R Does it have a bad effect upon you? Do you  
14 worry about it?  
15 S Sometimes . . . a little bit like . . . but not  
16 much . . . doesn't really worry me.  
17 R What about your parents? Does it affect them?  
18 S A bit. Not much really.  
19 R You wouldn't say it has a really big effect  
20 on you then?  
21 S No.  
22 R What sort of situations arise then? How are  
23 people unpleasant? Do you mind talking  
24 about it?  
25 S Well women you know . . . they have this red  
26 mark here (indicating the centre of the forehead)  
27 and they make fun of that and tell them names.  
28 R What is that mark actually? What is it called?  
29 S It isn't called anything . . . its like respect  
30 . . . say you are married and it shows respect  
31 . . . if you go to the temple it shows respect.  
32 They have it for that . . . . .  
33 Sometimes they call us Paki's and stuff and I  
34 tell them we're not Paki's we're from India.  
35 It's not many. Most people just treat us as  
36 ordinary like. (Shrugs his shoulders as if the subject  
37 did not worry him too much).

When first asked about discrimination it is interesting that Subhash describes his experiences in the family shop rather than at college or a youth club or other context.

There are a number of possible reasons for this. It could be the only context in which he experiences discrimination. Alternatively, it may be a context where once a group of perhaps racist English individuals enter the shop, it is difficult for Subhash or his parents to withdraw. In other words, they must proceed with serving the customer, even though the latter's language and behaviour may be extremely unpleasant.

It is actually a little difficult to know the kind of behaviour which Subhash is describing (lines 6 and 7). "They say things" is clearly an indexical statement. The researcher understands Subhash to be referring to racist remarks, or at least to criticisms of the shop or service which would not have been made to a white shopkeeper.<sup>7</sup>

The researcher was unable to interpret the expression "we don't serve them right" (line 7) with any degree of certainty, but assumed it referred to something such as the manner of handing over change.

When Subhash says "and we do" (line 7) there is an element of indignation and self-justification here, as if he cannot quite understand how any of his actions or serving practices and approaches, could be misinterpreted in any way. The researcher interprets Subhash as possessing a degree of conviction that he is in the right.

On re-reading the transcript the researcher's comment "and I would never behave like that ..." seems rather out-of-place as a perhaps unnecessary and unrequired claim by the researcher. On reflection though, it always seemed to the researcher necessary, when discussing aspects of racism and discrimination, to point out to students that there were many people (including himself) who found discrimination abhorrent.



It is interesting to reflect upon Subhash's professed response to racist remarks or discrimination (line 15). On the face of it, he does not appear overly concerned and seems to be able to take the provocative remarks in his stride. However, it is not easy to ascertain what "a little bit like" (line 15) actually means. It may signify a whole weekend spent anguishing over a racist jibe followed by a period of adjustment; or it may mean that insults and racist comments are shrugged off as the products of ignorant people. The researcher tended to accept the latter sense, partly because such a response appeared to be congruent with the rather assertive, extrovert and confident personality portrayed by Subhash. There was every evidence from the manner in which he acted that he would be capable of treating insulting behaviour with confident disdain.

For the researcher, Subhash reveals an interesting aspect of his attitudes towards discrimination when he describes how his family is sometimes referred to as "Paki's". Now used in this way "Paki" is not a descriptor for an individual coming from a particular country; it is in fact a serious racist jibe. It carries implications that an individual is a member of an ethnic group which the speaker considers is well-known for cooking smelly curries; which lives in enormous extended families in crumbling Victorian terrace houses; and who force their daughters into unwilling marriages. All of these stereotypical and racist connotations are contained in the use of the word "Paki" by a racist individual as an insult directed at an Asian person.<sup>8</sup>

"Paki" is in fact a generic term of abuse which is used by some white individuals of Asians in general. Now Subhash does not appear to confront the racist connotation of the term. Instead he treats it as a nationality descriptor and simply replies (line 34) that he is not from Pakistan, but from India. The implication of this reply is that the racist making the remark should not call him a "Paki" because he comes from India, and therefore all the unpleasant connotations of the former word should not apply to him.

"Indian" does not carry the pejorative connotations of "Paki". Subhash is exhibiting in a way, a sense of outrage at the injustice of being branded a "Paki" and all of the accompanying implications. What he is not doing is confronting the unfairness of using racist insults against anyone whether accurately referring to their country of origin or not.

Subhash is saying, in a sense, "don't use that racist insult against me, because it's unfair, since I am not a Paki". What he does not realise is that "Paki" is a term of abuse directed by some at all Asian-looking people. The users of such language are scarcely interested in the country of origin of people. They are responding in a much cruder sense to basic aspects of appearance and language and customs. In the first instance, they are probably responding to facial appearance and skin colour.

In this instance, Subhash appears to fail to make a general condemnation in his own mind of all types of racist remarks, implying, by omission, that such remarks are not too bad if at least they are directed at the correct racial group.

Without appearing to be too critical of Subhash there appears to be an implication here that he thinks discriminatory and racist remarks do not disturb him too much as long as they are directed elsewhere. There is a hint of a failure here to generalise from a personal experience to a wider context.

Although Subhash claims not to be too concerned about discrimination and racist comments, there was further evidence that it was a matter of some importance to him. One of the tutors who was arranging work experience placements suggested to Subhash that he return to a particular supermarket where he had previously had a placement. The tutor related to the researcher Subhash's reaction when he was asked to return to the same supermarket.

Tutor                      They want him to go back, but he says they're racist. They always get him to sweep up he says. But I said to him . . . don't they ask the white lads to sweep up - and he said not as much.

In the dialogue above, Subhash mentions that remarks are sometimes made to women in his family about the *tilak* mark worn on the forehead. Although Subhash was himself a Swaminarayan Hindu, he did not follow the custom of wearing such a mark. In the sense that the *tilak* mark is a clear and obvious mark of Hindu ethnicity, it seems to attract racist remarks.

This was not the only incident of racist remarks directed at the wearing of the *tilak*. In December 1987, during a tutorial class which the researcher had arranged to take, a Muslim boy turned to Shanti and said:

"Indiana Jones and the Temple of Dot."

This is an example of the sometimes obscure nature of student, teenage "humour", since without knowing the specific context this interjection has no relevance at all, and certainly no humour. However, when uttered while looking directly at Shanti and laughing derisively at the same time, it becomes unpleasant racist "humour", a racist jibe. The other boys in the class, all either white indigenous students or Muslims certainly understood the point of the remark and laughed or giggled quietly.

Almost simultaneously, Shanti turned to the Muslim boy and smiled and gave a quick, nervous laugh, as if trying to defuse the situation and join in the "joke" against himself. The researcher did not intervene at this stage, as he hoped that Shanti would be able to find a mechanism to handle the situation himself. Clearly he would be subject to this kind of provocative behaviour outside the classroom, and the researcher considered that



the best solution was to leave Shanti to handle the situation in his own fashion, if it were at all possible.

The Muslim boy, however, was not going to so easily abandon the source of amusement which he clearly thought he had found. He repeated the jibe and at this stage the researcher told him simply to "shut up and get on with your work". The researcher did not mention the racist content of the remark as he felt that this might further embarrass Shanti; or at least, draw more attention to his wearing of the *tilak* mark. It seemed sufficient to quieten his tormentor and leave him to assess how best to tackle remarks of this kind.

The researcher had no doubt that Shanti would be subject to this kind of racist verbal bullying during the college day, perhaps in the refectory, or in the corridors. The interesting aspect of this was that the perpetrator was another Asian student rather than an indigenous white student. In fact, it seemed that this incident was very little to do with any serious Muslim/Hindu animosity. There appeared to be little animosity between these two religious groups except when the researcher specifically raised comparative religious issues in class. This particular incident seemed to be more a function of an assertive, rather aggressive student seeking to ridicule and embarrass a rather shy and diffident student. It so happened that the selected method was to focus upon a mark of ethnic identity. This incident was by no means a particular case of a more generalised conflict between the two religious groups.

The incident did, however, raise the issue of how best to counteract such racist comments. It seemed clear that while such comments needed to be resisted in some way, and the perpetrators of such action needed to be reprimanded, there was a real danger that actions by teachers could draw attention to racist remarks, embarrass the victim further, and in a perverse way encourage the spreading and frequency of such



comments. The issue is discussed further in the reflexive account at the end of the thesis.

Although name-calling as a form of bullying is painful and to some extent psychologically destructive, the other aspect to racial name-calling is that it attacks not only the individual but his or her whole community and in a sense, his/her view of the world and philosophy. It is a challenge to the entire culture and way of life.

The Swann Report argued strongly for a realisation that racist name-calling existed in a different dimension to the commoner manifestation of this type of abuse.

We believe the essential difference between racist name-calling and other forms of name-calling is that whereas the latter may be related only to the individual characteristics of a child, the former is a reference not only to the child but also by extension to their family and indeed more broadly their ethnic community as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

As has been indicated earlier, it frequently proved difficult to encourage students to discuss their experiences of racism and discrimination. It was often the case that remarks about racism would occur in general conversation when the researcher was not expecting the subject to be mentioned. In December 1987 during a tutorial class Ratilal made the following comment:

- |   |                |  |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1 | Ratilal (Ral)  | They call you 'Paki' and then if you say     |
| 2 |                | "I am Indian, I'm not Paki", they hit you.   |
| 3 | Researcher (R) | Has this happened to you?                    |
| 4 | Ral            | Yes, you get in fights (he was laughing,     |
| 5 |                | and seemed to be taking it casually). If you |
| 6 |                | explain, they hit you all the same.          |

There is a reminder here of the response of Subhash to being called a "Paki". Although Ratilal does not actually claim to have said that he is of Indian background rather than from Pakistan, there is the clear implication that he has tried this strategy.

During the same class, an English boy provided an insight into this issue:

- 1 English student (E) They call me Paki . . . at school.
- 2 Researcher (R) I don't understand.
- 3 E Because I have darker skin and when
- 4 I'm in the sun I tan a lot.
- 5 R But you're not from abroad are you? You
- 6 said you'd lived in Spain.
- 7 E Well, I'm part Italian but they didn't know
- 8 that. They just called me Paki.
- 9 R How did you feel about that?
- 10 E I didn't like it. I felt upset. It wasn't
- 11 fair. It was worse because it wasn't
- 12 true. I'm not Paki.

This account sheds some light on the process of resisting racist remarks. The English student is using the same strategy as Ratilal and Subhash, ie. responding in a rational way to an attack which is essentially non-rational. The English student, like the Hindu students, is claiming that the principal wrong here is one of a misplaced label. As he says at the end "I'm not Paki". There is no real confrontation of the issue that it is wrong to use racist terms, whether or not they are accurate in terms of referring to country of origin.

The account is interesting because it suggests that the strategy used by Subhash and Ratilal is not unique to Hindu students.

During the same class Ratilal gave another example of racist remarks:

- 1 Ratilal (Ral) These friends of mine got a job at the  
2 supermarket, running the car park - Balwant,  
3 you know Balwant - and the manager  
4 calls them names like "Black B". They're  
5 leaving anyhow (he smiles while he tells the  
6 story).  
7 Researcher (R) How did they feel about it? You're laughing,  
8 but did they feel it didn't matter?  
9 Ral No they didn't like it. (smiling disappears).

The supermarket was the same one to which Subhash did not wish to return. It is interesting that Ratilal smiled while relating his account. This could have signified many things including a nervous reaction to relating racist remarks, or a genuine unconcern about the whole issue.

Facial expressions, like utterances, are indexical to the situation at hand, and in this case, as in other similar situations, the researcher constructs an interpretation of the social event. The smiling is to the researcher, an inappropriate reaction. There is nothing, quite literally, to laugh about here. Racist name-calling is not funny, and the researcher feels certain that neither Ratilal nor Balwant find it amusing. Therefore, one must assume that it is a deliberate strategy on the part of Ratilal to demonstrate an emotion such as 'unconcern' or 'indifference', or secondly, that it is an uncontrolled reaction demonstrating some type of cognitive dissonance.

The researcher did not interpret the laughter and smiling as being a deliberate strategy since there were other and perhaps better ways of demonstrating indifference; for example, by a shrug of the shoulders. It seemed to the researcher that Ratilal found it difficult to actually articulate the racist words which were used and therefore this nervousness resulted in inappropriate smiling. The supporting evidence for this is that Ratilal does not relate in full the racist words used. The racist abuse is, in fact, abbreviated (line 4).

From an interpretive point of view, it is interesting that this entire analysis is made by the researcher, in an almost subconscious manner. The researcher interprets the smiling as nervousness, without proceeding through the logical reasoning process outlined above. The reasoning exists in the sense that after social events, members are able to reconstruct the likely processes whereby they arrived at a particular interpretation of an event. However, at the time of the event, such processes remain largely unexamined. Members interpret and reinterpret comments, utterances and facial expressions with great rapidity. These interpretations clearly depend greatly upon the reflexive character of the particular situation, but provide for both members, a meaningful account of what is actually happening.

It is, of course, central to the above exchange that once the researcher challenges the student about his reasons for smiling, Ratilal stops smiling and acknowledges that Balwant and his friends did not at all enjoy having racist remarks made against them (line 9).

Once the researcher says (lines 7 and 8) "You're laughing, but did they feel it didn't matter?" he is calling into question the appropriateness of Ratilal's smiling. Ratilal recognises the legitimacy of this challenge and immediately becomes more serious.

The fascination of this type of analysis derived from the interpretive paradigm is that it points up the immense sophistication of these sense-making processes which members use. These processes are deployed almost automatically, without conscious reflection, and at great speed. In addition, they are not the sole province of the educated and articulate. All social members are socialised into acquiring these "members methods" to some degree or another, and once acquired constitute one of the most significant



strategies for both understanding what is happening in social interaction, and communicating these meanings to others and, in a sense, to oneself.

For the researcher, one of the most distasteful aspects of college life was the extent of racial jokes and comments in the staffrooms. These were not widespread to the extent of being heard in all staffrooms of the college with great regularity but were sufficiently common to give some cause for concern. An interesting aspect was that some of the members of staff who used racist language were actually known by the researcher to be interested in multi-cultural education and to be concerned about aspects of racial discrimination in society. These sensitivities, however, did not extend to refraining from using language in a racist manner in the staffroom - and this was almost exclusively a phenomenon of the staffroom. The researcher never heard racist language on college corridors or in front of students.

Although the researcher recorded many examples of racist 'humour' it seems almost distasteful to record all of these in this context. One or two examples seem adequate to illustrate the kind of language used. These comments were not tape recorded but were jotted down in field notes, with details of the context.

An example which related to Purshottham was when a lecturer asked rhetorically in the staffroom:

1 Is Peeshit here today? I'm sick of him missing  
2 classes.

The lecturer then laughed aloud, and said:

3 "Peeshit's a real skiver."<sup>10</sup>

It was a fairly characteristic type of staffroom "humour" to make a play on the names of Asian students. Sometimes names would be deliberately mispronounced; sometimes they would be Anglicised or spoken with an exaggerated local accent; while on some occasions, as this one, names were adapted as a source of "amusement".

The vulgar adaptation of Purshottham's name (line 1) is racist because it focuses upon a characteristic name of a particular racial group and transforms it into an insult. This insult is, in a way, directed not only at Purshottham but at all Hindus. It is, in a sense, an insult directed at all Hindu names, and seeks to ridicule them. Not only that, but it links the ridicule to a supposed failing of Purshottham, ie. that of his absenteeism from classes. In fact, Purshottham was no more absent from classes than was typical for students in general on the CPVE programme.

The lecturer laughed in between the two utterances and the researcher interpreted this as being a kind of self-congratulation at the lecturer's "ingenuity" in devising the adaptation of Purshottham's name.

The second example of racist language involved a senior member of the college management who happened to be in the staffroom and was overheard by the researcher responding to an innocent remark by a tutor:

Tutor	Kumar's working in a biscuit factory in the evenings.
Senior Manager	Must be making chocolate biscuits.

This remark caused fairly general mild hilarity in the staffroom. The researcher interpreted this as being a function of the status of the senior manager. That is, the laughter was a form of "courtesy" and "politeness" to the manager; offering him a form

of "respect" by laughing at his "witticism". There was nothing so hilariously funny about his comments (even ignoring the racist aspect) as to warrant the general laughter which resulted.

The comment is offensively racist because it comments on the skin colour of a particular racial group, and in a sense, like the previous remark, one can propose the argument that this comment is in fact an insult to the entire racial group in question. If the student had been a white indigenous student, one cannot conceivably imagine someone trying to raise a laugh by saying "Must be making custard creams". Such a situation simply would not occur.

One aspect of both situations was that no-one in the staffrooms at the time, intervened in these dialogues in any way to criticise the racist nature of the comments. This was, of course, true of the researcher as well. In retrospect, the researcher feels somewhat critical of his own lack of intervention.

In all such situations, however, there are social interactions and circumstances which influence the behaviour of participants and witnesses to verbal exchanges.

Staffrooms tend to be places which are much valued by teachers as centres for relaxation and as a consequence a good deal of tolerance is often exercised by teachers. A serious conflict between individuals can disturb this role of the staffroom as a place where teachers can find escape from the pressures of being with students. Therefore, conflict is often avoided, even if this means overlooking comments which in objective terms may be regarded as undesirable.

In the second example, there is the uncharacteristic situation where a senior college manager ventures into the staffroom. In this type of situation there is a tendency for the senior manager to become immediately the focus of conversation in the room, and for

teachers to direct their comments through him/her. Typically, there will be a polite response to anything the manager says, including an appropriate ripple of laughter if the manager makes a remotely humorous remark. This second situation appeared to contain some of these aspects. It is difficult to know how many teachers would have found these comments distasteful.

This analysis is not to justify non-intervention in these two cases, but to indicate some of the problematic features of such interactions. These issues are further discussed in the reflexive account, from the point of view of analysing and reflecting upon the researcher's methods for making a personal interpretation of dialogues and social situations.

The researcher was interested in investigating the types of racial stereotypes held by students in general on the CPVE programme, and in particular in enquiring into any generalisations which the Hindu students may have made about the indigenous white population. The researcher was conscious that the students might be reluctant to analyse the stereotypes which they may have formed, particularly in relation to English people, as it would necessitate their implicitly making remarks about their teacher.

During a tutorial group in March 1988, the researcher outlined the nature of a racial stereotype and after a short classroom discussion asked the Asian students in the group about any stereotypes they had heard about the English. The following is an extract from the general ensuing dialogue. Laxmi is the main speaker, but a Pakistani boy makes one or two comments here and there.

- |   |                |   |
|---|----------------|---|
| 1 | Laxmi (L)      | They are lazy . . . just sit around all the |
| 2 |                | time.                                       |
| 3 | Researcher (R) | What do you mean exactly? They don't do     |
| 4 |                | physical work?                              |
| 5 | L              | They watch tele . . . and drink and stuff   |



6		like that . . . whereas we work in corner shops
7		like.
8	Pakistani boy	They are low class [general classroom laughter].
9	R	Low class?
10	Pakistani boy	Same thing. They don't work. We have corner
11		shops and we work hard and then they're
12		jealous 'cos we 'ave lots of money. That's low
13		class.
14	L	We have to work hard. They won't have corner
15		shops. They dunt want them. They dunt
16		want to work long hours.
17	R	What other kinds of stereotypes are there? is
18		there anything else you have heard?
19	L	They give freedom for kids.
20	R	Yes, we've discussed this issue before.
21	L	I had this friend and she wanted to
22		go out and then she left me.
23	R	. . . because you couldn't go out at night?
24	L	Well, she didn't leave me; but we weren't friends
25		no more.
26	R	And what stereotypes do you think English
27		people have about Asians?
28	L	You should tell us that?!

Laxmi's first comment is equivocal (line 1) and the word "lazy" needs further explication and context before the sense is clear. She appears to be arguing that English people do not have the sense of a work ethic, as do Asian people (lines 5 to 7). Although Laxmi says that English people "just sit around all the time" (lines 1 and 2) the researcher interprets this as signifying not merely a lack of physical energy, but more primarily a lack of determination to apply themselves to something Laxmi would see as worthwhile, such as a business enterprise.

Laxmi may also have been basing her judgements either on a particular social class group or age group. Thus when she says (line 5) that English people "watch tele . . . and drink", this may be a summary of the leisure activities of the English young people with

whom she comes into contact. She certainly seems to be suggesting here (according to the researcher's understanding) that English people have a different value system in relation to work and leisure.

The comment from the Pakistani student (line 8) aroused general hilarity in the class because no-one understood what he meant by "low class". They appeared to be laughing at the incongruity of the utterance.

The Pakistani boy went on to provide an explanation of the sense of his utterance - a sense which again involved notions of a lack of work ethic among English people. The rather unusual use of the words "low class" puzzled the researcher, but he interpreted them to be employed in the opposite sense to the English colloquialism of describing a person as "classy". To talk of someone in these terms is generally to think of them as possessing refined manners and behaving within a civilised and moral framework. The Pakistani boy seemed to the researcher to be saying that it was "low class" within this sense, to behave in a fairly lazy manner and then be envious of Asians for having "lots of money" (line 12).

Perhaps a simpler explanation was that he had his own particular concept of "high class behaviour" and that this notion of imagined jealousy was not part of it, and was therefore "low class".

Interpretations such as these are fraught with difficulties, and one can only make subjective interpretations of meaning. As Barnes and Todd write:

As Garfinkel and others have shown, meaning depends on the knowledge brought to the interpretation of situated utterances: it does not adhere to the utterances themselves. Since each participant in group talk brings a different frame of reference to the interpretation of an utterance, meaning must be multiple. Moreover, the meanings are also fluid and indeterminate, since

each new utterance implicitly reinterprets what has gone before:  
there is no point in the flow of a conversation at which the  
investigator can stop and say "That's what they really meant".<sup>11</sup>

The other important aspect of this process of interpretation is that sense-making at the time of the linguistic event is often different from analysis some time afterwards. At the moment of participation in the series of utterances all kinds of reflexive aids exist to help the researcher in constructing meaning. The facial expressions of the participants in the conversation; the body gestures; the movement and activity of people in the surroundings; the physical nature of the environment, such as the configuration of the room and other events taking place in it - all these aspects exert a reflexive effect upon the procedure for conversation and the nature of the sense making in which participants engage.

In addition, not all of these reflexive characteristics of the situation are recorded during this type of research. Although the dialogue is recorded on tape and field notes are maintained, there are many small but significant events which would require at least video-recording coupled with very detailed field notes to record. Even then, such recording would still reflect the subjective selectivity of the researcher.

Analysis sometime after the event therefore is certain to be qualitatively different from sense-making at the time; firstly because some of the detail has been forgotten but also because post-event analysis has at its disposal the additional data of subsequent events. The effect of this can be that subsequent analysis is able to repair the indexicality of an utterance in greater depth and detail because of the additional reflexive data. Later analysis thus has advantages and disadvantages.

Barnes and Todd have described this issue:

The frame of reference from which we interpret utterances itself changes during conversation: it is only in retrospect that participant or observer can attribute a more stable meaning to an exchange (though this attributed meaning can itself change).<sup>12</sup>

Laxmi's next utterance (lines 14-16) is an extension of the previous theme, but specifically related to the issue of Asians owning "corner shops" and (by inference) being very successful in financial terms at running them. Laxmi's parents owned such a shop themselves and were extremely affluent. They owned a large detached house in a middle-class suburb of Churchtown and every day Laxmi was brought to college and picked up at the end of the day by a relative - usually mother or elder sister - driving an expensive BMW saloon.

Laxmi says that English people "won't have corner shops. They dunt want them" (lines 14-15). This is not merely an assertion that English people do not "want to work long hours" (line 16) but is a much more comprehensive statement about the value system of English people as seen by Laxmi. These utterances are very much indexical to the entire background of the conversation, where Laxmi's general thesis is that English people do not possess the same work ethic as Asian people.

When she says "they dunt want them" (line 16) the researcher understands her to be saying that English people reject all that the corner shop stands for. They see working in a corner shop as being unskilled and low status work, even though the potential earnings are infinitely greater than a "white-collar" office job, which although carrying some of the peripheral trappings of a profession, will have a much lower level of remuneration. The researcher understands her to be saying that English people are unprepared to expend the effort to be financially successful in life, and there is an element of disdain in her evaluation of the English.



Laxmi continues to discuss another stereotype which she holds of English people and this involves the alleged liberality with which they treat teenage sons and particularly daughters. Again, much of what Laxmi says is indexical, and particularly so in relation to the knowledge which the researcher has of her background, and her personal frustration at the "strictness" (from her viewpoint) exercised by her parents over her going out to clubs and discos at night.

When Laxmi states that her friend "wanted to go out, and then she left me", she is describing what was probably a complex and lengthy series of events, in terms of a short and very indexical utterance. It is assumed that Laxmi suffered a period of fairly prolonged anguish here as she tried to negotiate with her parents a certain degree of freedom to accompany her close friend to clubs at weekends. When this process failed, her friend gradually made new friends who were able to go out. Laxmi, however, is very concerned to point out that the friend did not actually "leave her", but they "weren't friends no more" (lines 24-25).

The researcher understands Laxmi to be saying here that even though she was prevented from going out with her friend, and even though this did interfere with their friendship to some considerable extent, they were able to maintain a relationship. It seems to the researcher as if Laxmi is pointing out that she was able, by virtue of her own personality, to retain the friendship of this girl.

The issue of the stereotyping by indigenous people (and particularly by teachers) of ethnic minority groups is well documented, and the adverse effects analysed at length. The Swann report when discussing the extent of inaccurate racial stereotypes, commented:

This ignorance extends to virtually every aspect of the background of ethnic minority communities - their countries of origin, the languages they speak and their religious and cultural traditions. We ourselves have now ceased to be surprised when even in multi-racial areas and school, pupils and teachers refer to all non-white ethnic minorities collectively as "Pakis" and to their language as "Indian" or "African", or regard the wearing of a turban or not eating meat as simply matters of personal preference, which can be altered by "gentle persuasion".<sup>13</sup>

While not to any degree underestimating the serious social and individual psychological effects which such stereotyping can have, it remains an interesting and significant research area to investigate the nature and degree of racial stereotyping amongst ethnic minority groups themselves. Such studies would help to map something of the world view of such ethnic groups.

As explained earlier, there was very little conflict between Hindu and Muslim students on the CPVE programme. They mixed together socially very well indeed, and formed friendships across the religious groupings. The friendships formed tended, from the researcher's observations, to be based upon common interests or perhaps affiliations of personality, rather than belonging to the same religious group.

In fact, there are some cultural features shared by the Hindu and Muslim students which would encourage them to form friendships with each other rather than with white English students. A factor could be the issue raised latterly by laxmi - that of persuading parents to allow teenagers to visit clubs and discos in the evening. Another could be the feeling that both groups are subject to racism and discrimination because of their Asian ethnicity.

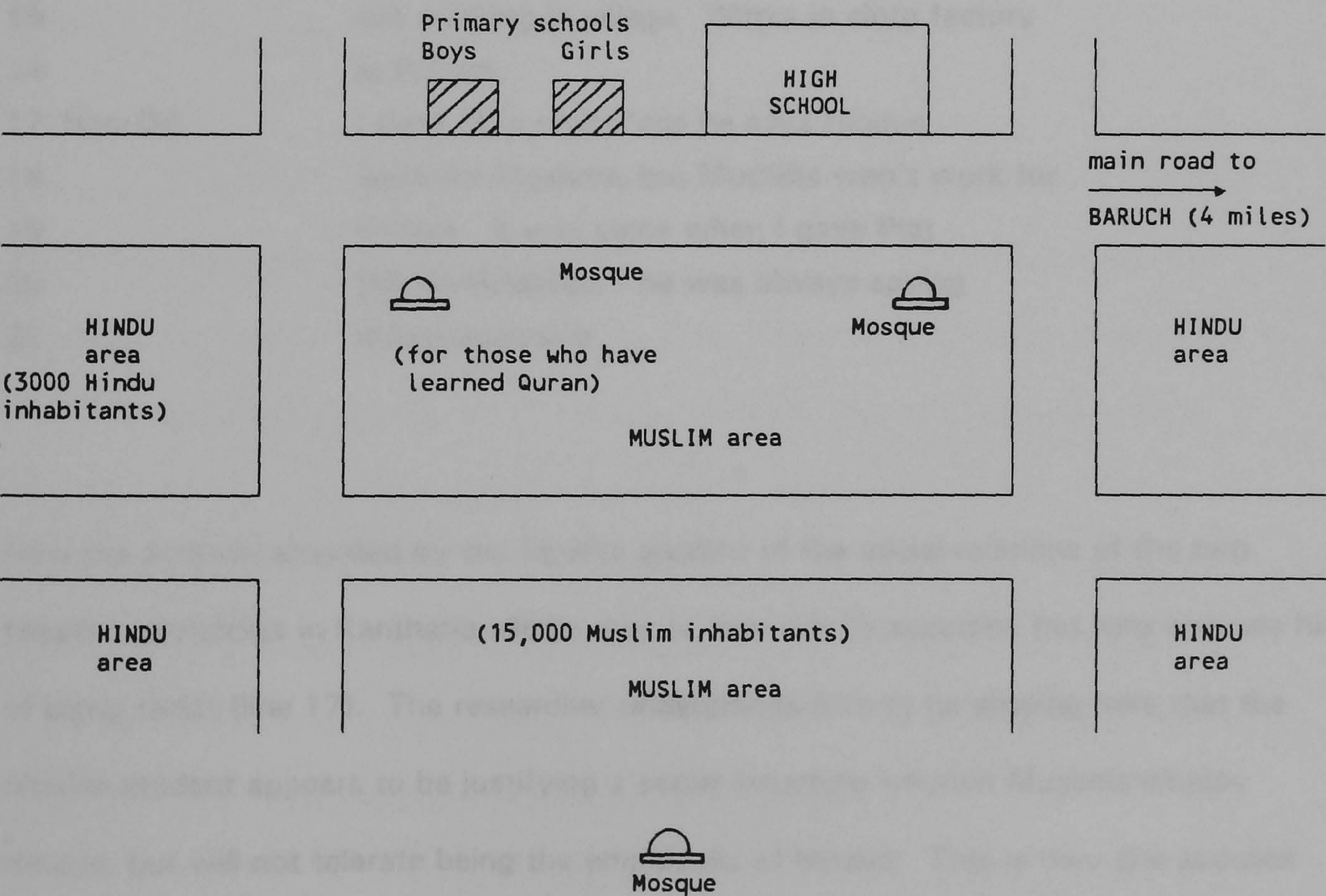
The Muslim students were in a large majority on the course in relation to Hindus, and sometimes there was the sense that the Muslim students, perhaps encouraged by the domination of numbers, would make tactless comments about one Hindu student or



another, or perhaps they would make rather broad generalisations about Hindu religion or culture, which would irritate a student.

During a tutorial class in May 1989, the researcher was asking a Muslim student about the village from which he came in India. This particular student was extremely serious and devout, and was in fact a *Hafiz*.<sup>14</sup> He had only lived in England for two years and his English was extremely halting. In addition, he was a serious-minded and rather introspective student. Perhaps, because of, rather than in spite of this, he was held in some esteem by both English and Hindu students, and certainly by the other Muslim students.

He drew a small sketch map of his village, *Kantharia* in the Baruch region of Gujarāt:





The researcher then asked the Muslim student about the relationship between the two religious communities in the village. Niru was sitting nearby and listening closely to the conversation:

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Muslim student | Always get on. They are same poor               |
| 2  | (M)            | Hindus . . . they work on lands doing           |
| 3  |                | crop and farming for Muslims who got            |
| 4  |                | land. Like we family have fifteen acres         |
| 5  |                | . . . we got these two, three houses and        |
| 6  |                | fifteen acres, so poor Hindus they do's farming |
| 7  |                | work.   |
| 8  | Researcher (R) | What about poor Muslims . . . do they work      |
| 9  |                | for rich Hindus sometimes?                      |
| 10 | M              | No. They not work.                              |
| 11 |                | [During this conversation Niru is smiling       |
| 12 |                | wryly but not saying anything.]                 |
| 13 | R              | Muslims never work for Hindus?                  |
| 14 | M              | No. They work in factories in Baruch . . .      |
| 15 |                | not working in village. Works in cloth factory  |
| 16 |                | at Baruch.                                      |
| 17 | Niru (N)       | I think M is racist 'cos he says Hindus         |
| 18 |                | work for Muslims, but Muslims won't work for    |
| 19 |                | Hindus. It was same when I gave that            |
| 20 |                | talk on Hinduism - he was always saying         |
| 21 |                | things against it.                              |

Now the account provided by the Muslim student of the social relations of the two religious groupings in Kantharia village may or may not be accurate, but Niru accuses him of being racist (line 17). The researcher understands Niru to be arguing here that the Muslim student appears to be justifying a social structure wherein Muslims employ Hindus, but will not tolerate being the employees of Hindus. This is why she accuses him of being racist. She assumes that he is in favour of this system, with its implicit value system of the superiority of Muslims over Hindus.



On the evidence of the transcript, one cannot unequivocally say that the Muslim student is supporting rather than simply relating the facts of a situation. Niru, however, is making sense of what is said in terms of her previous judgements about the Muslim student; in particular, the remarks he made during a talk she gave on Hinduism. Niru is clearly interpreting what has been said, indexically. The researcher also understands and makes sense of what has been said in this way.

The attitudes of the students to racial discrimination and to racism are thus complex and at times difficult to analyse. The students were not always forthcoming in discussing these issues and perhaps this is understandable given the complex and painful emotions which must be aroused by racist behaviour.

With regard to the generalisations suggested so far by the research, there is no major evidence in this chapter to either support or negate them. There is however considerable data from which new provisional statements can be generated.

First of all there is some evidence that students in the sample find it rather difficult to discuss the issues of racism and discrimination in an open, rational way. Narain appeared to be rather tentative at comparing the incidence of discrimination at the workplace with that in college. Ratilal exhibited rather nervous behaviour when discussing the use of racist language, and both Subhash and Laxmi were uncommunicative about the subject of discrimination, in a classroom context. It is likely that the latter behaviour was a function of being in a class group since afterwards, Subhash shared a willingness to discuss the subject on a one-to-one basis. This evidence indicates that it is reasonable to suggest as generalisation (xi):

- (xi) Hindu students appear somewhat reluctant to discuss racial discrimination in a group situation, but are normally willing to do so on an individual basis.

Secondly, there is a body of evidence which indicates that the perceived existence of racism and discrimination is a significant factor in determining selection of career routes, and work experience placements. Narain's evidence indicates that the perceived existence of discrimination in the workplace is a factor in determining him to continue with full-time education. The evidence of Subhash in relation to a work-placement at a particular supermarket, and of Ratilal concerning part-time work at the same supermarket, indicates that racial discrimination is a significant factor in selecting a potential work-place. There is some slight contrary evidence from Subhash in the sense that he appears able to cope with occasional racist language in the family shop situation. In this case, however, it is probably relevant that in a sense he has no option but to learn to cope with it, because the offenders are customers, and in any case, he cannot avoid this kind of situation. In the other cases, however, the students are able to avoid the situation and appear to take this course of action whenever possible. As generalisation (xii) it seems therefore reasonable to assert that:

- (xii) Hindu students try to avoid work situations where they feel they will be subject to racist behaviour. This factor can have a significant effect upon career plans.

There is interesting evidence concerning the reaction to racist name-calling. In the case of Subhash and Ratilal there is evidence that they do not react to name-calling as a wrong in itself, but react simply to the accuracy or otherwise of the term in relation to themselves. There is an alternative explanation, however, and that involves assuming that they do object to racist name-calling in general, but in the particular case when it confronts them, they choose to deal with it by reacting to its accuracy or otherwise as an ethnic description of themselves. It is difficult to arrive at even a provisional conclusion on this issue and therefore the researcher prefers to note the evidence without formulating a generalisation at this stage.

Racist remarks and "jokes" are unfortunately a regular feature of staffroom life. These remarks are directed at the Hindu students as much as at Muslim students and Afro-Caribbean students. Two representative examples of such "humour" are recorded here, but the researcher takes the view that to record a large number of these remarks will achieve no significant purpose and in any case, is unnecessarily distasteful. It should be recorded once more, however, that the researcher was never witness to such remarks being made either to, or in front of, students. One can, however, suggest as generalisation (xiii):

(xiii) Hindu students are the subject of racist staffroom remarks and "jokes".

The researcher came across no significant evidence of systematic Hindu-Muslim animosity amongst the students on the CPVE programme. There were many cases of students from the two religious traditions getting on very well indeed and in fact being inseparable friends. The only possible incidents to the contrary were those involving Shanti being subject to racist remarks about his *tilak* mark from a Muslim student; and Niru taking exception to the remarks of a Muslim boy about his home village. In the former case, the incident did not necessarily involve a Muslim-Hindu dimension; while the second case did reflect some mutual suspicion between the two groups.

Generalisation (xiv) thus becomes:

(xiv) There is no significant evidence of religious conflict between Hindu and Muslim students.

Finally there is Laxmi's evidence about stereotypes of white indigenous people. The stereotypes which she mentions include notions of white people not possessing the work ethic to the same extent as Hindu people; and that white people give their children much more freedom in terms of going out in the evenings.

While it is interesting that Laxmi thinks in terms of these stereotypes of English people, there is insufficient evidence to suggest a generalisation. One can simply note the evidence as having possibly wider implications.

We turn now to gender roles amongst the Hindu students and their notions of marriage and the relationship between the sexes.



CHAPTER 8     GENDER ROLES

When teaching the Hindu students on the CPVE programme it was not immediately obvious that there were any particular gender roles which distinguished the student sample from indigenous students. Some male students were diffident and reticent, while other male students were assertive. There was a similar range of personalities among the female students. The advantage of open-ended interviews as a research tool was that it revealed attitudes and value systems at which one might only have guessed without the advantage of further such data.

Pushpa was a well-spoken and articulate student who had attended a private single-sex school prior to coming to college. She was quiet, dignified and thoughtful in her approach to college life, and was almost inseparable from her best friend who was a Muslim girl. During a tutorial class in May 1987 the researcher discussed the topic of sex discrimination in employment. Although initiating the debate with the entire class, the researcher was particularly interested in Pushpa's responses. During the discussion there was the following exchange, with one or two interjections from male Muslim students:

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Can anyone think of examples of sex discrimination     |
| 2  |                | from life in general . . . perhaps at school or        |
| 3  |                | college or anywhere at all?                            |
| 4  |                |  |
| 5  |                | (Period of silence)                                    |
| 6  | Pushpa (P)     | Cheerleaders . . . like on American football.          |
| 7  | R              | That's a very interesting suggestion Pushpa. I         |
| 8  |                | think I may know what you are going to say.            |
| 9  |                | What makes that sex discrimination?                    |
| 10 | P              | They just dance about in all those feathers and        |
| 11 |                | the men play American football . . . it's kind         |
| 12 |                | of . . . well, they should play or be doing something. |
| 13 | R              | So what do you feel when you watch them? What runs     |
| 14 |                | through your mind?                                     |

15	P	They should play. Why can't they play?
16	Muslim boy	Girls play hockey . . . football.
17	Another Muslim	Cricket.
18	boy	
19	P	Yeh, but the girls are just dressed up aren't they?
20		They should go off and play their own game.

The researcher found the example of cheerleaders on American football to be an interesting example to illustrate a particular kind of female gender role. There was no evidence that this particular example had been given to Pushpa by someone else and thus it seemed as if Pushpa had developed this idea herself. Certainly during this period, American football was being increasingly shown on television. One might have imagined that Pushpa and some other teenage girls would have seen the role of cheerleaders as glamorous, but this was clearly not the case. Pushpa says (line 10) that 'They just dance about in all those feathers'. This is not intended simply as a literal description of what the cheerleaders do. In fact there is a strong sense of irony here. Pushpa is saying that the girls could be doing much more constructive things - taking part in the game or perhaps being simply ordinary spectators. The researcher understands Pushpa to be saying that dancing in the cheerleaders costumes relegates the girls to simply acting as supporters of men, rather than persons who are cheering on their favourite sports team. She seems to be saying that they have only a superficial physical attractiveness and that this is their prime function.

When Pushpa says (line 11) "and the men play American football" she is contrasting the passive role of the cheerleaders with the active role of the football players. She appears to be drawing a sharp and clear distinction between these two gender roles. It is particularly difficult when constructing sociological interpretations to discard the perspective of the researcher. In this case, the above analysis coincides very closely with the researcher's sense of understanding the role of cheerleaders. It is extremely

difficult to be certain that the sense-making processes of the researcher are not unduly affecting the interpretation of data.

In this particular case, however, Pushpa does reiterate and expand on her argument to such an extent that the researcher becomes more and more confident of the interpretation. Pushpa says (line 15) "They should play", and finally (line 20) they "should go off and play their own game".

Pushpa's final powerful plea for what she sees as an unjust and demeaning role is when she says (line 19) "... the girls are just dressed up aren't they?" Pushpa appears to be saying that in this role one can only evaluate the girls in terms of their appearance. They are not actually doing or achieving anything and this is what Pushpa finds unacceptable.<sup>1</sup>

In this particular tutorial group there were two other girls besides Pushpa, and these girls were both Muslims. Later in the discussion the researcher asked the girls about anticipated careers. The two Muslim girls said "secretary" while Pushpa said "accountant". The researcher then changed the subject to that of marriage, and asked whether it was fair that the man retained his name, while the woman had to change. A Muslim boy answered first:

- |    |                 |   |
|----|-----------------|---|
| 1  | Muslim boy      | Yes (said very firmly and loudly).          |
| 2  | Pushpa (P)      | It doesn't matter.                          |
| 3  | Researcher (R)  | What about the girl going to live with      |
| 4  |                 | the boy's parents? I believe that happens   |
| 5  |                 | in Asian culture. Is that fair?             |
| 6  | Same Muslim boy | I'll buy another house. (General laughter). |
| 7  | P               | It's up to them. They should talk about     |
| 8  |                 | it and decide.                              |
| 9  | R               | The married couple?                         |
| 10 | P               | They should decide themselves.              |
| 11 | R (to Pushpa)   | Would you feel under any particular         |

12 pressure to go and live with the boy's  
13 parents?  
14 P (slight smile) - no further response.

It should be noted that here, as on previous occasions, Muslim boys tended to dominate the classroom discussion. Some of them are assertive and even when not taking a full part in discussion, they tend to dominate proceedings by humorous interjections (see line 6) which tend to disrupt the flow of discussion.

Muslim students are the largest ethnic grouping in the tutorial groups. A typical CPVE group might be composed of about three-quarters Muslim students of whom the majority would be male. The female Muslim students tended to be quiet and reticent, and it was often rather difficult for students such as Pushpa to articulate their feelings.

There were certainly varieties of group pressure among the Asian students, not to make statements which were strongly at odds with the prevalent norms of Asian culture. Such comments would attract derision on the corridor after the class had ended.

Within this framework the researcher had to adopt a very encouraging tone with students such as Pushpa, and try to persuade them to articulate their feelings in what could be described as a fairly hostile environment. This may well explain the rather brief comments made by Pushpa in the above conversation. She may not have felt able to expand on her ideas in the context of the classroom.

When the researcher asked whether it was fair that a woman had to change her name to that of her husband on marriage, Pushpa replies equivocally "It doesn't matter" (line 2). The researcher, however, does not interpret this remark as indicating that it doesn't matter if the woman has to change her name, ie. the whole issue is of no consequence; rather, the researcher understands Pushpa to be saying that it really does not matter



whose name is retained. The issue of a name is not really of fundamental importance and whether husband or wife retains the surname does not matter. The researcher assumes, however, that Pushpa does not therefore agree to an automatic adjustment of the wife's name without the tacit agreement that the reverse process could be adopted without any social or cultural loss.

The interpretation is supported by Pushpa's response to the next issue - that of the newly-married wife moving to live in the home of her husband's parents. Pushpa asserts that the married couple "should talk about it and decide" (lines 7 and 8). Thus Pushpa does not accept the blind following of convention, but wants a rational discussion by the two people who will be affected most by the decision.

At the moment the entire discussion is involved on a theoretical abstract level of hypothetical questions. However, when the researcher asks Pushpa how she would feel personally about living with her husband's parents, she chooses not to answer. Only a slight enigmatic smile betrays her feelings. The researcher assumes that Pushpa would feel under pressure to move to live with her in-laws, but that she would not automatically wish to do this. She almost certainly cannot predict how she would actually react. Much would clearly depend on the individuals involved and on Pushpa's reaction to them.

The researcher's understanding of Pushpa's general response to these issues is that she is an individualist who although sensitive to the social pressures of the Asian community, feels that it is important for her to consider these matters for herself.

This kind of analysis is suggested by S Tomlinson in a discussion of arranged marriages:

It is likely that, despite the stress involved, young Asians will attempt to develop a way of life in Britain that is satisfactory to them, and they are by no means 'victims' of an older generation who are impervious to change.<sup>2</sup>

One of the strategies which the researcher employed in order to elicit student views on issues concerned with gender was to provide case studies for consideration by a tutorial group. Case studies achieved varying degrees of success, in the sense that some elicited more responses than others. The following case study was given to two different student groups in February 1988.

**Case Study**

An Asian girl migrates to this country with her parents and is educated here. She trains as a social worker. She marries an Asian man who lives with an elder brother in a large house. In keeping with Asian tradition she moves to her husband's house, and the elder brother remains living there. She and her husband have a child, and although they are happy, she becomes increasingly annoyed at having to look after two men in the household. She has grown up in Western society and although she knows it is acceptable in Asian tradition for the elder brother to remain, she eventually leaves with her child and goes to live with her sister.

What are your views on this case study?

The researcher introduced the case study and added a little further detail explaining that the case study was based upon an actual Hindu family known to the researcher. The researcher asked the students what they thought about the rights and wrongs of the situation, and in particular whether they had come across situations where a girl had married and been expected to live with both husband and brother.

After a brief silence Ramila said:

- |   |                  |   |
|---|------------------|---|
| 1 | Ramila (Rm)      | Yes . . . well . . . there is one . . . (She looked |
| 2 |                  | down and would not say any more).                   |
| 3 | Researcher (R)   | Purshottham?  |
| 4 | Purshottham (Pu) | It's very common. It always happens like            |
| 5 |                  | that. With us, the girl goes to live with           |

6 the husband's family.

7 R Would she prepare food for the husband's brother?

8 Pu All the family.

9 R So actually, a situation like this is quite common.

10 Normal really.

11

12 (There was general nodding in the group -

13 the Muslim boys in the class were also

14 nodding).

15 R Well what about the girl leaving? What do

16 you think of that?

17 Pu Very rare. You wouldn't find that. Very unusual.

18 Ramila (Rm) They should have talked it over. She shouldn't

19 have gone.

20 Muslim boy See the elder brother wouldn't have nowhere to

21 go. Where's he goin' to go? It's his home.

22 R You think it should all have been discussed

23 more?

24 Pu That's what happens. The whole family talks

25 about it. The family decides. She shouldn't

26 of gone.

27 R You see, I sometimes think the problem was

28 that this particular girl was brought up

29 partly in one culture and partly in another.

30 She was traditional Asian in some respects

31 but obviously looked at life from the Western

32 point of view too. Do you ever feel that you

33 are under pressure to behave in a certain

34 way because of your parents view of life?

35

36 (There was general acquiescence in the group -

37 nods, and everyone said yes).

38 Pu Every time you go out you get these lectures. Like I

39 go out when I want, but each time I get these

40 long talks about what we used to do in India

41 and stuff like that.<sup>3</sup> It doesn't make any difference

42 - but it's suffocating like. They try and suffocate

43 you, and all Asian kids are like that.

44 R What about the reverse situation where perhaps

45 sometimes you are faithful to your parents culture

46 and don't adapt to Western ways.

47 Pu Like meat-eating?



48 R Are you vegetarian then?  
 49 Pu I won't eat beef . . . ever! Doesn't matter  
 50 anything.  
 51 Muslim boy and drinking. (everyone laughs). You go out and  
 52 everyone is having a drink and you don't.  
 53 [None of the students laughed here - as I expected  
 54 them to in disbelief - and so I assumed that what  
 55 they were saying was not exaggerated].

In her first utterance, Ramila (line 1) appears to be very tentative and unsure of herself. She does not give a definite response to the issue of knowing circumstances where a girl lived both with her new husband and also his brother. She appears to be prevaricating. The researcher understands her to be saying by "... there is one" that she is familiar with at least one such situation but for one reason or another does not wish to elaborate on the circumstances.

Purshottham, however, is quick to point out the normality of a newly-married girl living with her in-laws. However, he does not specifically take up the issue of living with the husband's brother or brothers as well. The researcher interprets this as Purshottham's awareness that in terms of British culture this would be a particularly strange custom. There are some English students in the class and Purshottham may not have wished to appear so culturally different that he would advocate a girl living with both husband and brother. The researcher assumes that Purshottham is afraid of having jokes made at his expense, and that he supports this kind of social arrangement. He thus concentrates the issue on the newly-married girl living with the "husband's family" (line 6).

When the researcher tries to press Purshottham on the issue of the girl looking after, and indeed cooking for the husband's brother, he is still evasive and replies "all the family" (line 8). The researcher assumes that to be an affirmative answer, with Purshottham again skillfully glossing over the issue of the girl looking after the husband's brother.



The reaction of the Muslim boys indicates this custom may be more accurately described as a cultural feature of the Indian sub-continent rather than a specifically Hindu custom. It is however, the norm in Hindu tradition.

After the wedding, which takes place in the bride's home, the bridegroom brings her to his own home, and she becomes a member of his joint family. If he has to live away from home to work, he sometimes leaves her in the care of his mother and other elders; the mother-in-law is a very important person for a young Hindu wife.<sup>4</sup>

On the issue of the girl deciding to abandon husband and in-laws family, Purshottham is adamant that this is "very rare". He supports his judgement by saying "very unusual" (line 17).

Ramila (line 18) emphasises what she regards as the family group decision-making which should operate in these circumstances. "They should have talked it over".

The researcher understands Ramila to be implying by this that if there had been a proper discussion of the issues, then the girl would not have left the family home, but would have effected some kind of compromise. Then in her next utterance, she makes the direct evaluative judgement that the girl should not have left. The researcher understands Ramila to be supporting the traditional marriage system here, with its male dominated social distribution of power. The researcher assumes that if a discussion about the issues had taken place, then it would have been unlikely for the girl to make any significant progress in changing the social expectations of her husband and brother-in-law. As Killingley writes:

The typical Hindu family is the patrilineal joint family: that is, kinship through the male line is more important than kinship through the female line, and the brothers, sons, grandsons and

great-grandsons of the head of the house, with any of their sisters who are not married, form one family.<sup>5</sup>

Ramila's last comment does not disclose any rational evaluation of the social system or of the situation, but simply reveals an almost intuitive judgement that the girl should not have left. Purshottham (lines 25-26) supports this judgement.

The discussion then changes subject to discuss relationship with parents and with Hindu tradition. Purshottham, in a rather impassioned description (lines 38-43) makes it clear that Hindu boys as well as girls, come under parental pressure to conform to traditional norms of behaviour. There are almost certainly differences of emphasis between boys and girls. Purshottham says "Like I go out when I want" (line 39) which the researcher interprets as signifying that he does not, in practical terms, pay any heed to the pressure which is brought to bear upon him. The researcher assumes, however, that girls would be persuaded one way or another, either not to go out in the evenings in teenage groups, or alternatively to be chaperoned.

When Purshottham says he is told about "what we used to do in India and stuff like that" (lines 40-41) the researcher assumes that the parents who are doing the "lecturing" are recalling, to some extent rather favourably, their memories of social life and customs in India.

Certainly, in India, young men do not stay within the confines of the family home during the evenings. The climate of India favours living outside, and there are numerous entertainment possibilities. The researcher assumes that the uncertainty of the parents arises because of their unfamiliarity with social life in England.

There is also the dimension of relations with the opposite sex. The researcher understands the parents here to be anxious about Purshottham perhaps establishing a

. relationship with a non-Hindu girl. Although in India, there are many opportunities for  
. boys to socialise in the evenings away from home, formal relations with the opposite sex  
. are circumscribed by a tightly-constructed set of social norms, and it may well be the  
absence of such norms which is worrying for the parents.

. N Nelson has focused on the differences in opportunity for men and women to socialise  
in Indian villages:

Men have special houses where they meet, exchange news, make  
decisions for the community, and manoeuvre politically. Women  
have no political consciousness, no feelings of female solidarity  
and have no groups of their own.<sup>6</sup>

The final interesting aspect of this utterance is that Purshottham identifies this issue not  
just with Hindu teenagers but with "Asian kids" in general (line 43). There is clear  
evidence here than in issues like this he sees a commonality of social situation between  
Asian teenagers. He does not use words such as "black" or "ethnic minority" or even  
"immigrant", but by using the phrase "Asian" he identifies this issue of parental pressure  
as being characteristic of an Asian social setting.

At the end of the discussion, the issue of drinking alcohol was a little ambiguous. When  
the Muslim boy first mentioned "drinking" (line 51) there was general amusement in the  
class, but the researcher was uncertain of the reason for this. When the Muslim boy  
explained that he never had a drink, there was no response from Purshottham. He did  
not laugh or comment in any way.

This may have been out of deference to the Muslim majority in the group, or, as the  
researcher interpreted it, because Purshottham too did not drink. If this was so, then

there were certainly differences with students such as Amritlal and Niru who boasted frequently about their excessive drinking exploits.

The researcher gave the same case study to another tutorial group, not particularly with the purpose of having a controlled comparison but because the case study had been very successful at initiating discussion on aspects of gender roles.

This group was much smaller, composed of only six students. The conversation was dominated by Laxmi and two boys, one an Indian Muslim and one Afro-Caribbean. The other three students took little part in the discussion, and the following transcript does not involve them.

First of all, the students were asked whether they had ever come across a situation where a young bride had to live with both husband and brother. In contrast to the previous case they said they had not. The researcher tried to start a debate by asking Laxmi whether the girl was in principle justified in leaving the in-laws' home.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Laxmi (L)      | She was. She should of done.                       |
| 2  | Researcher (R) | Have you ever felt that you have come              |
| 3  |                | under restrictions at home?                        |
| 4  | L              | All the time. I have to do washing up              |
| 5  |                | and clean and stuff like that . . .                |
| 6  |                | just like that girl.                               |
| 7  | Afro-Caribbean | You don't.   |
| 8  | boy            |  |
| 9  | L              | Course I do. You don't know.                       |
| 10 | R              | All right, what about freedom? Do Asian girls have |
| 11 |                | the same amount of freedom as English girls?       |
| 12 | L              | No we don't. I can't go around shops. I can't      |
| 13 |                | go down town when I want. I have to stay home.     |
| 14 | Muslim boy (M) | You don't. I seen you down town.                   |
| 15 | L              | You have not. Have I ever been to town             |
| 16 |                | with you Mary?                                     |
| 17 | Mary           | (no response)                                      |



18 L I have not.

19 M I seen you in Scopes (a shopping precinct).

20 L My ass!

21 R Laxmi, er . . .

22 L Well . . . he hasn't seen me.

23 R Who puts you under pressure to stay in then

24 Laxmi, your parents?

25 L My mum. She's not here anyway. My aunty.

26 R Did I meet her at parents' evening.

27 L Yes.

28 R She seemed very nice.

29 L Me mum had freedom. When she was in

30 India they let her stay out 'til eleven or

31 twelve. She tells me.

32 R She could stay out at night?

33 L Unless she gets in mischief. That was in

34 India. Not much to do there. She don't like

35 me going out. People think you are looking

36 for it. People say you have bad reputation.

37 You go to town . . . people see you and then

38 they say you are picking up lads and

39 seeing lads.

40 R So people in the community make up stories

41 about you? . . . then spread these stories

42 around?

43 M They do. They do it sir.

44 L They do it. You wouldn't believe.

45 M They must keep a good reputation. When a girl

46 gets married her husband wants her to have

47 good reputation. That is the reason.

48 L We have a good reputation. You just tell stories.

49 M (smiles).

50 R Do you think your mother is worried that there is

51 more danger in this society than in India? (Question

52 addressed to Laxmi).

53 M That is right. If you go to town at night lads

54 might say racial things and get you and you

55 can't look after yourself. We look after ourselves.

56 We give them one back; so its OK for us (meaning

57 boys) to go. (Conversation addressed to Laxmi).

58 L Crap! You think I can't look after myself? I give

59 them one.

Laxmi usually dressed in very expensive clothes, which were slightly at odds with the type of clothes worn by most of the students on the CPVE programme. The majority of students wore some variation on the theme of jeans with a casual jacket - often a black leather jacket in the case of boys.

Laxmi's clothes, on the other hand, were glamorous. On the day of the above conversation she wore a mock crocodile skin jacket and tall white leather boots. She had an expensive gold watch and gold jewellery and had a very fashionable tousled hairstyle and light pink lipstick. It was quite unusual for girls to wear makeup on the CPVE programme.

The fact that these students said that they had not come across a case where a bride had to live with and look after both her husband and his brother is no more nor less significant than the evidence of the previous case. Small scale ethnographic research such as this is not the appropriate way in which to determine the extent of social customs. Evidence such as these conversations only indicates whether respondents are aware of a social custom which may or may not be widespread.

Laxmi is quite adamant (line 1) that the girl was justified in leaving the family home. The transcription of the dialogue does not really do justice to the forcefulness and certainty with which Laxmi stated this. It is less from what she says, rather than how she says it, that the researcher understands Laxmi to feel very strongly about Hindu social customs which she considers oppressive and unreasonable.

Laxmi's next utterance only emphasises this. It is clearly indexical to this general sense of feeling oppressed by Asian social customs, because taken on their own there is nothing particularly restrictive about having "to do washing up" or having to "clean"

(lines 4 and 5). The researcher, however, understands from this that Laxmi is expected to do a considerable amount of work around the house and this is probably related to her gender. She appears to be saying that a boy would not have to do all this work, but that as an Asian girl it is seen as her duty. She objects to this system, and the researcher understands this to be the cause of her strong feeling with regard to the case study that the young bride should indeed have left.

In response to a question about the extent of her personal freedom Laxmi speaks with the same assertion and frustration. Much of what she says (lines 12-13) is again indexical. When she suggests that she "can't go around shops", the sense of this seems to be that while Laxmi can go to the supermarket and do the family shopping, she is not free to stroll around boutiques and fashion shops either on her own or with groups of her college friends. If she did this presumably adults would regard her as being exposed to a certain amount of at the least, trivial Western culture and at the worst, some form of corruption.

When Laxmi says "I can't go down town when I want" (line 13) the researcher would normally have understood this to mean that on some occasions, perhaps during the day, a visit to town for a specific purchase, would have been allowed. On the other hand, visits during the evenings, particularly to clubs and discos, would not be allowed.

However, this utterance (line 13) is indexical to the background knowledge of the researcher that Laxmi is actually brought to school by car by relations or parents and collected at 4.15pm. This indicates the extent of parental control over her behaviour, and even more so because Laxmi lives almost within walking distance of the college and could get home quite easily herself. The assumption, therefore, is that her parents would not even want her to travel to town during the daytime.

P Parmar has written about the issues of gender in the Asian community, and while she is sympathetic to needs as defined by Asian girls, she also feels it is important to consider the fears of parents:

In a situation where Asian parents see hostile forces attempting to alienate their children from them and their cultural traditions it is important to allay their fears . . . If Asian parents feel that their authority is being questioned and their cultural values are being challenged by unsympathetic outsiders, they are justified in being suspicious of anyone who wants to involve their daughters in activities outside the home.<sup>7</sup>

When the Muslim boy asserts that he has seen Laxmi in a shopping precinct in the town centre, her response is sharp and vitriolic (line 20). She almost spat out the words. Laxmi was certainly not adverse to using bad language, as indeed was Niru. Niru, however, tended to use bad language almost as part of her every day linguistic competence, whereas Laxmi only swore, as here, when pressed on a particular matter. Normally she was fairly restrained in her communications with people.

There are two possible interpretations of the need to use bad language here. In the first case, she may have been simply reacting to being pressed on the issue by the Muslim boy, and in final exasperation tried to put an end to the frustrating dialogue.

On the other hand, it may have been that she could even tacitly admit that she had been seen in town, for fear that through gossip amongst the students her family heard about it. Therefore, she had to take some very aggressive stance against these accusations in order to put a stop to any possible talk amongst the students.

The researcher tended to favour the latter explanation because of Niru's general anxiety about the entire issue and also because of the close supervision exercised by her parents.



When Laxmi says (line 25) that her Mum "is not here anyway", the researcher assumes that she has returned temporarily to India to visit relatives. In a sense, this may explain the very strict regime to which Laxmi is subjected. One can imagine her mother leaving her as the responsibility of a female relative who then feels a considerable burden at making sure that Laxmi does not get into 'bad' company or start mixing with boys while her mother is in India. It is not difficult to imagine that the female relative would instigate a fairly harsh and rigorous regime and moreover that Laxmi would object to this more than if it were exercised by her natural mother.

Laxmi begins to contrast her own position with that of her mother when she was young in India (line 29). When Laxmi says "me Mum had freedom" the researcher makes sense of this in terms of her mother having freedom yet within an accepted framework of morality and social custom. It is only within this framework that one can make sense of what Laxmi says.

When Laxmi says (line 33) "Unless she gets in mischief" the researcher understands that her mother was allowed to stay out late at night unless she used this freedom to link up with boys. The researcher assumes that in a social situation such as India where both boys as well as girls, tend to conform to social sexual moves, then it is probably understandable that parents allow girls to stay out late at night.

The concern about Britain is presumably that there does not exist a common moral consensus in society, but a very wide range of personal moralities. Indian parents can find little of consistency here or little to depend upon. They thus feel the need to impose a strict morality.

It is clear that within the Hindu community it has become the norm in England, not to allow girls the freedom of going to town. If parents allow this at all, or if a girl manages to gain some freedom by subterfuge, then clearly other parents start rumours about the

morality of a particular girl, and it is easy to appreciate the social pressure which this can bring to bear upon parents and also the tangible effects in terms of marriage opportunities.

The Muslim boy (line 53 onwards) indicates what he believes are the dangers for girls of going to town and looking round shops or going to discos. Laxmi's reaction to this is characteristically assertive (line 58). She is particularly derisive of any suggestion that she is inferior to or weaker than boys. The researcher understands "I give them one" to mean that Laxmi would not be frightened of a situation in which even a fight developed.

The researcher asked the students in the group to write a brief summary of their attitudes towards the case study and whether in fact the young married woman was justified in leaving home. The following was written by Laxmi:

1	She has done the right thing to leave her husband
2	then he would probably realise why she has left
3	and probably he would make a change.
4	If she never left and still going through this trouble
5	he would of payed any attention to see what her
6	disadvantage was in her life.
7	And if she came back the brother-in-law either
8	get married so she has got extra help or one or the other
9	leaves the house.

This short piece of writing supports the general impression given by Laxmi in the dialogue, that she is an assertive individual who holds it to be important that one intervenes in the world in order to transform one's life. She advocates the girl leaving her husband, because "then he would probably realise why she has left and probably he would make a change".

The strategy which Laxmi advocates, is not one of passive acceptance or even of adapting to unfavourable circumstances. Rather it is one of taking incisive action in order to transform a situation.

If the woman had remained at home, Laxmi considers that her husband "would of payed any attention to see what her disadvantage was in her life" (lines 5 and 6). The researcher understands this to signify that in Laxmi's opinion he "would not have paid any attention" to her situation.

Earlier in February 1988 Laxmi had been discussed in casual conversation in the staffroom. At one stage, the researcher had been talking to a tutor who taught on the CPVE programme for part of the week. The following conversation was not tape-recorded but was transcribed from memory shortly afterwards.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Tutor          | You know Laxmi . . . she's looking after                  |
| 2  |                | herself at home. She gets into college on time.           |
| 3  | Researcher (R) | Is she?   |
| 4  | Tutor          | Her mother's on a round the world cruise. They're loaded. |
| 5  | R              | Are they really? That's amazing.                          |
| 6  | Tutor          | Mind you, if you saw the clothes she wears. They live     |
| 7  |                | in a big detached house on Coronation Avenue, just        |
| 8  |                | past the Frenchley lights. Own swimming pool.             |
| 9  | R              | What do the parents do?                                   |
| 10 | Tutor          | Must be in business. Don't know. <sup>8</sup>             |

This account supports the data of line 25 in the previous conversation where Laxmi says that her mother "is not here anyway". Certainly it seems as if Laxmi was reared in a fairly liberal atmosphere by Hindu standards, if her mother was able to leave to go on a world cruise. It is uncertain whether her father accompanied his wife. It certainly does become clearer that if Laxmi has built on her mother as a role model in terms of

independence of spirit, and yet when her mother leaves to travel, Laxmi is placed under a fairly strict regime by a female relative, then Laxmi is going to feel quite aggrieved by this and could well react against the imposed discipline.

A further interesting insight into the value systems of Laxmi and Ramila emerged from a casual anecdote recounted by a male member of staff on coming into the staffroom.

This short statement was not recorded but written down immediately afterwards in field notes:

Tutor	They're sat down on chairs near the library and say they're watching blokes' bums! They're giving marks. Tim Livesley came by and they gave him nought out of ten. They're real cheeky.
-------	--

One aspect revealed by this particular account is the relationship existing between that particular tutor and the two teenage girls. The researcher is fairly confident that Ramila and Laxmi would not have disclosed to him (the researcher) that they were "watching blokes' bums". The researcher assumes this not so much because he holds the position of course tutor and thus of some minimal authority in the college system, but because of his perhaps more formal personality and relationship with students.

The tutor concerned had a much more informal relationship with students - for example, drinking with them in a pub towards the end of the Autumn term just before Christmas.

This short extract is understood to represent a much longer informal conversation between the tutor and the girls which probably contained a good deal of ribaldry and humour. This understanding is based upon previous conversations involving the tutor.



The other important aspect which the researcher understands from this extract is that Laxmi and Ramila are engaging between themselves in conversations about the physical attributes of male staff, and probably students. No doubt they would probably be unhappy about their parents overhearing or knowing about such conversations, but they do not mind sharing them with a college lecturer. Under normal circumstances, it is assumed that such conversations would be impossible with male Asian students and male Asian staff because of the severe social constraints upon such sex-related informal talk. The exchange of informal talk with a white lecturer, uninvolved with the Asian social constraints and norms, provides an opportunity for Laxmi and Ramila to experiment in casual sex-related conversation, but with the important protection and safeguards offered by the context of the college and by the fact that the male concerned is a lecturer. From their perspective there is probably little chance that any of their conversation can be misinterpreted as anything but idle amusing chatter.

In November 1988 the case study employed with other students and mentioned earlier in the chapter, was used to initiate a discussion with Amritlal and Niru.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Amritlal (A)   | The elder brother should've left if the      |
| 2  |                | marriage wasn't going OK. Usually it         |
| 3  |                | doesn't matter because the elder brother     |
| 4  |                | is married anyway.                           |
| 5  | Niru (N)       | She could've just made a bit extra           |
| 6  |                | food for him. Wouldn't have made             |
| 7  |                | any difference to her.                       |
| 8  | Researcher (R) | What is the situation with extended families |
| 9  |                | now? Are they very strong in Churchtown?     |
| 10 | A              | They are. Usually they buy houses together   |
| 11 |                | and knock through . . . then they can have   |
| 12 |                | privacy if they want.                        |
| 13 | R              | What about marriage? Is the arranged         |
| 14 |                | marriage still common?                       |
| 15 | N              | It doesn't matter so much. If you really     |
| 16 |                | want to marry someone you can. They          |
| 17 |                | would let you.                               |

18     A                   Caste matters more. There was this friend  
19                       of mine who comes from Gujarāt . . . like  
20                       most people in Churchtown come from  
21                       Gujarāt . . . and he wanted to marry  
22                       this girl from Surat but his parents not  
23                       let him, so they ran off together.  
24  
25                       General laughter.

26     R                   What about going out at night? Is it possible  
27                       for girls to go out? Can they do what they  
28                       want to do?  
29                       Laughter.

30     N                   I go out to parties like, and me Dad runs me  
31                       there. He don't mind so long as he knows where  
32                       I'm going. As long as I tell them they don't mind.  
33                       They both drink at home and I drink too.

34     A                   I go out drinking at night and I make sure  
35                       I get back when they've gone to bed. It's the  
36                       best way.  
37                       General laughter.

38     N                   The trouble is some parents are so strict that  
39                       they can't go out at night. So they go to the  
40                       Reinwood (a pub) during the day. Then if  
41                       their parents know it is worse. There was this  
42                       mother and she found out and she had  
43                       a heart attack.

It is perhaps significant that Amritlal took his own distinctive stance with regard to the case study. He was perhaps the most westernised of the student sample in terms of adopting a western secular lifestyle and value system. He scorned the Hindu temple, and went out drinking in pubs a great deal. He was physically large, having broad shoulders, about five feet eleven inches in height and weighing about thirteen stones. His response to the case study did not reflect a standard Asian viewpoint of the girl being at fault.

The researcher understood Amritlal to be saying (lines 1 and 2) that the situation was acceptable so long as the marriage appeared to be functioning satisfactorily, but that

when things started to deteriorate then the elder brother should have left. Amritlal certainly does not defend the men in the situation.

Niru, on the other hand, appears not to appreciate the social dynamics of the family situation. She appears to reduce the problem to one of the girl making a little more food, when in reality, this will only constitute a small part of the complex problems of this family.

When Niru says (lines 6 and 7) "Wouldn't have made any difference to her", she appears not to appreciate the psychological pressures on a young married couple of having an older relative living in the household.

Amritlal's first comment is placed in an interesting context, when he talks (lines 10 and 11) of the importance of extended families in Churchtown. In this sense, one might have expected him to want the older brother to stay in the house, and the young wife to manage the relationship as well as she could. This is, however, not the case.

Niru does not appear to uphold the institution of the 'arranged' marriage. Niru's opening phrase is (line 15) "It doesn't matter so much". The researcher makes sense of this particular utterance in terms of Niru saying that the arranged marriage system is no longer of paramount social significance. He understands Niru to be saying that the institution is still of importance, but that young people could easily decide to circumvent the situation, without incurring the anger of parents. When Niru says (lines 16-17) "They would let you", the researcher makes sense of this utterance in terms of parents not generally objecting to a love relationship. This tends to support the tolerant approach exemplified by the priest at the temple in Churchtown. The researcher interprets this phrase as a further example of the tolerance of the Hindu community. This though is an example of a reflexive interpretation. Part of the researcher's assumptions about Hindu

communities is that they are generally tolerant. Thus, although this phrase is clearly expressing tolerance about parental views of love marriages, the researcher interprets this further and generally widens the context. This is where the reflexive nature of the researcher's perception of events affects the understanding and interpretation of ethnographic research data.

Niru's account (commencing line 30) of going out to parties sounds reasonably tolerant by the standards of some British teenagers, and certainly is not the pattern which the researcher would have expected. The picture portrayed is not one of a teenage girl who deludes her parents, but of very liberal parents who treat their daughter as a mature adult and ask only that she informs them of her destination.

Amritlal, on the other hand, (line 34) appears to want to maintain a deception. He goes out drinking but appears to wish to withhold the information from his parents.

Niru's reference to the Reinwood pub is very interesting. The researcher discovered the relevance of this public house for Asian students, quite by accident, when he went there for a drink just before Christmas 1988.

The pub is located about three-quarters of a mile from the college and on a large and rather exclusive private housing estate. The estate is to the north of the college and on the opposite side from the areas of the city near the centre, where there is a high proportion of Asian residents.

The researcher was surprised to find that the majority of the customers of this pub were Asian teenagers - mostly students from the college. One student explained that the Reinwood was sufficiently far from the Asian areas of town to make the risk of accidental discovery by parents almost negligible.



Later the same month, during an informal class discussion, Niru revealed more of her concept of female gender roles.

1	Researcher	Do parents think education is a good thing?
2	Niru	Some parents do . . . some parents don't.
3		Like for boys, they can stop on and do what
4		they want and do FE . . . girls, soon as
5		they've left school stay at home and parents
6		don't want them to work for anything. They
7		stay at home and get a husband and
8		that's it.

Niru is here portraying a rather different type of future for a Hindu girl, than that which she has planned for herself. When she says ". . . parents don't want them to work for anything" (line 6) the researcher understands Niru to be saying that parents typically do not want their daughters to have jobs or careers and more than that, they do not want them to have significant social contact in the outside world.

The phrase about not working "for anything" carries the sense of girls not having ambitions or plans for the future. It carries implications that parents typically do not view their daughters as having either the ability or the motivation to develop a professional life for themselves.

This approach is further emphasised by Niru's use of the phrase "and that's it" (line 8), as if once a girl is married then that is the end of any possibility of individual ambition or plans. Everything will from then on be sublimated to the needs and wishes of her husband. She has lost her individuality and personality.

It is possible that Niru had perceived this as being a familiar situation for Hindu girls, and had decided to deliberately construct a different social reality for herself. On the other

hand, it may be that Niru is naturally individualistic in her approach to building up her own world view and life style, and that when she comes to analyse how other girls of her age live and accede to their parents wishes, then she feels that they are forsaking their own personalities.

Niru's assertion about the general lack of participation of Asian girls in FE is supported by data from Inner London Education Authority colleges for 1986/87:

Black students were more highly represented on non-advanced and lower-level courses especially level 5 courses, where they made up 31.8 per cent of those studying at this level, than on higher level courses (levels 1 or 2:3). Black students accounted for only 17.2 and 14.1 per cent of student intakes to level 1 and level 2:3 courses respectively. Black female students were particularly likely to enrol on level 5 courses (where they accounted for 17.4% of students in this category).<sup>9</sup>

There is thus evidence that conceptualisations of gender roles are evolving and changing as the students in the sample reconstruct their world views in the light of the continuous interaction between their home culture and that of the secular education system and larger western society.

The evidence on gender roles in Hindu society is interesting yet one of its features is the contrary nature of some of the data. The students in the sample clearly view the same situation in different ways.

The first piece of dialogue illustrates Pushpa's view that girls dressed as cheerleaders are not demonstrating the more profound qualities which they possess. She advocates a more active role for women than simply being decorative. Pushpa returns to this theme later when she argues that married girls should involve themselves in the decision-making processes. Whereas Pushpa is fairly restrained in the way in which she expresses these

arguments, Laxmi personifies an assertive stance to the world, particularly in her exchanges with Muslim boys, where she stands her ground and often wins the verbal battles. In terms of leading a very active social life and refusing, in a sense, to adopt a traditional passive persona, Niru also exemplifies this attitude. It seems reasonable then to suggest the following generalisation:

- (xv) Hindu girls consider that girls and women should adopt an active, participatory role in society.

Apart from this general statement, a feeling emerges from the dialogues that Hindu girls do not accept tradition uncritically. In discussions of the freedom accorded Hindu girls in this country, Laxmi analyses the amount of freedom she feels that her mother had when young in India. When a Muslim boy emphasises the need for girls to have an unimpeachable reputation and by implication supports traditional social structures, Niru reminds him that the reputations of girls can be lost through boys inventing stories about them. Niru certainly does not accept traditional values. She drinks at parties and goes to pubs - mixing freely with boys in social situations just as would a typical English teenager. The contrary picture is provided by Ramila, who suggests that the girl in the case study should not have abandoned her marriage. In this she gives a slight impression of supporting traditional value systems. In spite of the short pieces of dialogue from Ramila, it appears reasonable to suggest that:

- (xvi) Hindu girls do not accept traditional gender roles uncritically.

With regard to the perceptions of Hindu boys about traditional gender roles, the situation is rather less clear. In his evidence about the case study Purshottham appears to support the traditional value system by suggesting that the girl should not have left her husband. However, later in the same dialogue he speaks of the "suffocating" nature of tradition. Amritlal considers that the eldest brother should have left the home, in order to help his

brother sustain the marriage. In this he appears to be attributing responsibility for the situation to the eldest brother rather than to the wife.

There is thus no unequivocal data here which can be used to support a hypothesis concerning male views of traditional gender roles.

Some of the student sample spoke clearly of the pressure brought to bear by parents, in an effort to encourage and cajole students to conform to tradition. Laxmi makes it clear that her mother tries to enforce her staying at home instead of going out to town. In her mother's absence, this value system is enforced by female relatives. Niru indicates that it is fairly common for parents to attempt to keep teenage girls at home, yet at the same time, she explains how her father takes her in the car to parties. The researcher assumes on the balance of probability that Niru's father is rather exceptional. This assumption is indexical to the researchers own background knowledge of Hindu society in this country. On this basis alone, and with the rider that much further data is necessary, generalisation xvii becomes:

(xvii) Hindu parents attempt to reinforce traditional gender roles, as they perceive them.

Finally, some students either speak directly of, or imply, a strong social pressure to conform to traditional roles. In terms of the case study Purshottham speaks of the family discussing issues and ultimately taking decisions as a social entity. Laxmi speaks of the Hindu community in effect passing judgement on the behaviour of Hindu girls, and coming to conclusions about the allegedly invented stories which circulate within the Hindu community. The implication of this is that social pressure is exerted in order to encourage young people to conform. Niru speaks of parents encouraging boys to further their education, but of not treating girls in the same way. There are implications in what



Niru says, of attitudes in the wider Hindu community. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest:

- (xviii) Social pressure exists within the Hindu community to encourage conformity to traditional gender roles.

The data on gender roles is thus somewhat conflicting but given the significant differences between traditional Hindu society and the secular West, it is reasonable to assume that individuals will construct their own particular social reality from the interaction between these two cultures.

There is no data in this chapter to significantly support or negate previous generalisations.

## CHAPTER 9 LANGUAGE

The Hindu students in the sample rarely spoke in Gujarāṭi in college. This contrasted somewhat with the Muslim students who habitually conversed in Urdū or Gujarāṭi. The researcher was aware that both the main Hindu temple and the Swaminārāyan temple held language classes in Gujarāṭi, and was interested in whether any of the students attended these. In March 1988 the researcher raised this issue with Ratilal after a class:

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Have you been to Gujarāṭi classes at all?          |
| 2  | Ratilal (Ral)  | Yes, I went last year, but I stopped now. My dad   |
| 3  |                | made me stop.                                      |
| 4  | R              | Your dad. Do you mind my asking why?               |
| 5  | Ral            | Oh well, it was just the money. It costs twelve    |
| 6  |                | pounds each and there was my brother and           |
| 7  |                | sister, so it was thirty-six pounds and he thought |
| 8  |                | it was too much.                                   |
| 9  | R              | Was that a term?                                   |
| 10 | Ral            | A year . . . I think.                              |
| 11 | R              | But you speak Gujarāṭi?                            |
| 12 | Ral            | I speak it. I was born in India and I came         |
| 13 |                | here when I was eight so I speak it well,          |
| 14 |                | but I was learning to write.                       |
| 15 | R              | Do you read religious books then in the classes?   |
| 16 | Ral            | We do the alphabet . . . there are thirty-four     |
| 17 |                | letters and then we do short words.                |
| 18 | R              | So you hadn't really mastered reading books        |
| 19 |                | and longer things.                                 |
| 20 | Ral            | No, I just was learning the alphabet, which I      |
| 21 |                | know now.  |
| 22 | R              | You've really done extremely well then Ratilal,    |
| 23 |                | because your English is very good and you've       |
| 24 |                | no problems with written English. You will have    |
| 25 |                | learned some English in India before coming here?  |
| 26 | Ral            | No (smiling). You don't start English in Indian    |
| 27 |                | schools until you are about twelve, so I did not   |
| 28 |                | understand when I first came here.                 |
| 29 | R              | So your language is very important to you?         |
| 30 | Ral            | Yes.   |

31 R And other people I've spoken to say its important for  
 32 speaking to grandparents, particularly because they  
 33 don't usually speak English. Is that so?  
 34 Ral Yes.  
 35 R Do you have grandparents here?  
 36 Ral Yes. They don't speak any English. We only speak  
 37 Gujarati at home. My parents don't speak English.  
 38 My father a bit . . . just a bit.

The researcher was somewhat surprised to discover that the Hindu temple charged for the Gujarāti lessons, particularly when it would presumably have been fairly easy to find people willing to pass on the written language to children. The researcher assumed that the charge was a means of obtaining money for temple funds, although the Hindu community normally gives so freely that it is difficult to imagine this as a necessity.

The extent of the language obstacles to be overcome by young Hindu immigrants is clearly indicated in this dialogue (lines 26-27). Ratilal had arrived in England at the age of eight, speaking no English at all. It is almost inconceivable that a child in this situation can achieve his potential in the education system. Within this framework it becomes a major achievement to be coping with a Further Education course at the age of sixteen.

In a study of children in multi-racial comprehensive schools, D J Smith and S Tomlinson found that in families where children were born outside the United Kingdom, parents were more likely to send children to mother-tongue classes, than in families where children were born in this country.

They also found that:

... a large number of children do attend out-of-school language classes, and this represents a substantial level of organisation and effort on the part of the minority communities. Nevertheless, the majority of bilingual children do not go to these classes, while at the same time the state schools provide little language support for

them. This means that the majority of bilingual pupils receive no formal tuition in minority languages, which may help to explain the low levels of literacy in minority languages reported by the children.<sup>1</sup>

The degree of Ratilal's difficulties is also increased by the fact that his parents speak no English (line 37). In fact then, his acquisition of practical language skills in English has taken place largely in school time, supplemented by an unknown amount of time spent speaking English to friends, and by watching television and visiting shops. Clearly it is impossible for any systematic teaching to have taken place at home.

It was clear that Ratilal would have spoken Gujarāṭi at home to both his parents and grandparents, and that this mother-tongue language contact would have had a major part to play in giving Ratilal a sense of cultural tradition. Presumably, it was important to his parents and grandparents that Ratilal sustained an interest in his own mother-tongue, because this would give them a link with Western culture through the medium of Ratilal. In addition, it would presumably give them a sense of cultural continuity, by being able to transmit their value system to the next generation.

R Kaushal provides a number of reasons why Asian parents consider mother-tongue teaching to be very important:

Most Asian parents would say that mother-tongue teaching is crucially important for the following reasons:

1. to ensure an effective communication between parents and children;
2. to avoid a widening of the generation gap;
3. to develop their children's bilingual potential;
4. to ensure positive self-esteem and pride in their ethnic base and cultural heritage;
5. to facilitate religious instruction;
6. to maintain a meaningful link with the country of origin.<sup>2</sup>



Rajendra also related how Gujarāti classes were offered at the Swaminārāyan Hindu temple. The following conversation took place in an annexe of the college library in May 1989.

- 1 Researcher (R) What is the social life like at the Temple?
- 2 Rajendra (Rd) Yes.
- 3 R Do you have lessons or anything there?
- 4 Rd Yes . . . Gujarāti and English.
- 5 R So you have lessons in English as well? To improve
- 6 your English?
- 7 Rd Yes.
- 8 R Who gives you those?
- 9 Rd Bapu.
- 10 R Who is Bapu?
- 11 Rd He is a man who is educated.
- 12 R He's educated?
- 13 Rd He studies here.
- 14 R Is he a student then?
- 15 Rd Yes.
- 16 R What course is he on?
- 17 Rd I'm not sure.
- 18 R Not sure. He teaches you English anyway. Do you
- 19 have lessons in religion?
- 20 Rd Yes.
- 21 R Do you sit exams in religious studies?
- 22 Rd Yes.
- 23 R Have you sat any?
- 24 Rd No.
- 25 R No. What did you think when you came to
- 26 college then? Before you came?
- 27 Rd Quite good.
- 28 R You had good feelings about it? You didn't think
- 29 there were nasty things going on there?
- 30 You thought it was OK?
- 31 Rd Yes.
- 32 R Were your parents pleased that you were coming?
- 33 Rd Yes.

It is interesting that Rajendra learns both Gujarāṭi and English at the Swaminārāyan temple (line 4). It may be that the Swaminārāyan community considers the functional use of English to be sufficiently important to provide tuition. Alternatively, such lessons may indicate a limited faith in the tuition provided in school. On this hypothesis it may be that school English lessons are perceived as being at an inappropriate level for Hindu children who are bilingual.

Certainly the report "A Language for Life" supported the idea of bilingualism:

... [bilingualism] should be seen as an asset, as something to be nurtured, and one of the agencies which should nurture it is the school. Wherever possible (the school) should help maintain and deepen their knowledge of their mother tongues.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, the report further suggests that a study of the mother-tongue can help in learning the "second language" - English.

Confidence and ability in this language will help the children to the same qualities in their second language, English.<sup>4</sup>

It is perhaps significant that the person who gives the English lessons is described as "Bapū" (line 9), meaning "Father" and used as a term of respect. This individual, who is clearly male is described as "educated" (line 11). The interesting feature of this response is that it is a reply to a question asking "Who is bapū?" (line 10). This is a form of question which invites many responses ranging from a description of the kind of work which he does; to his place of origin in India; or his home and background in England. Rajendra, however, describes "Bapū" in terms of his being "educated". The researcher understands this to signify that bapū is a man who speaks, reads and writes English very

clearly. This assumption is made because the subject under discussion is English tuition. However, it is not the only interpretation and it may well be that he is referred to as educated because of his religious knowledge.

It is interesting that the temple has decided to use a Hindu to teach English. Presumably, it would have been feasible to enlist the help of a native speaker known to a member of the temple. However, there may be advantages to learning English from a non-native speaker, under some circumstances:

Native speakers of English called on to deal with non-native speakers receive no training and therefore frequently make simplistic judgements in relation to how much English people know, the difference between being a second-language speaker and being illiterate or uneducated, and in the consequences of interpreting an unfamiliar use of English in terms of behaviour and attitude.<sup>4</sup>

The assumption is that non-native speakers would not tend to be susceptible to these errors.

The researcher decides to follow-up the description of Bapū as "educated" and to clarify this term (line 12). The only definition of the term is that "he studies here" (line 13). There is an implicit judgement here that if one is capable of following a course at Churchtown Tertiary College then one must, ipso facto, be educated! However, the researcher interprets the sense of this as meaning that Bapū has a sufficiently good command of English to be following a fairly 'advanced' course.

Rajendra also takes examinations in Religious Studies (line 27). These examinations are based on a curriculum developed in the Swaminārāyan temple headquarters in Ahmedabad, and there are a number of set texts to help students pass the examinations. The texts are published in Gujarāṭi and English editions. Part of the introduction to the English edition reads:

The booklet has been so designed as to serve as part of the curriculum for examinations for youths. More specifically, it is offered as a textbook for the first of the examinations, "Satsanga Prarambh" in the series.

It is our earnest prayer that the Satsangi boys will study these booklets carefully, pass the examination with flying colours and, above all, derive immense spiritual benefit and appease Swamishryi and our beloved Guru Swami Shri Narayanswampdasji.<sup>6</sup>

Rajendra's text books were the English language versions and he was intending to take the series of examinations in English. There would have been advantages therefore for Rajendra to learn English from a member of his own community, who would no doubt use some illustrative material from a religious context. There may, however, have been some contradictions between what was taught at the temple and the tuition during English language classes at the college.

It is interesting to contrast the ability of students at spoken English and their ability to write grammatical English. During a tutorial class in April 1989, the researcher gave the students a photograph to examine. They were asked to write down their thoughts and impressions of the photograph. The latter showed a scene in a typical English urban outdoor market. An Afro-Caribbean woman is queuing for vegetables and fruit. A rather dishevelled older Englishman is looking directly at her, with a quizzical expression on his face. Amritlal wrote the following:

1	The man on left is thing who and what is that
2	thing were has it come from and what is it
3	doing in my market she does not mix with as
4	what the earth has she got on looks like a piece
5	of rag to me. look at her hair it short like
6	a boys I've never seen that sort of hair before. He
7	look confused.



This piece of prose is certainly not grammatical - lacking capital letters and punctuation marks; yet it does have a certain immediacy of description. The use of the phrase "that thing" (lines 1/2) expresses forcibly the condescension expressed on the face of the old Englishman. Similarly, the use of the pronoun "it" (line 2) expresses a similar sense of lack of worth being extended to the Caribbean woman. The female gender pronoun is not used here, and moreover the man describes her as encroaching on "my market", which signifies very clearly the sense that the woman is an intruder. There is also a sense in which the researcher feels Amritlal is suggesting that the man regards the woman as an intruder, not only in the market, but in his country. Finally Amritlal is describing the man as critical of both the woman's dress and coat, and also of her hair.

Although this piece of prose is ungrammatical, it has certain particular qualities, notably its immediacy and forceful, emotive description. It is not difficult to appreciate that Amritlal's level of facility at written English will continue to disadvantage him in the British education system. A wider acknowledgement of the importance of Asian mother-tongues might provide opportunities for students such as Amritlal to express their intelligence and ideas more effectively. As D Oldman writes, when discussing the disadvantages of Asian children who cannot use English fluently:

The fact that they speak, as do most Britons, nonstandard varieties of English, and possibly other languages as well, is their birthright, and must surely be recognised by any education system that claims to be British.<sup>7</sup>

Amritlal's writing differs considerably from his spoken English which varies from being articulate standard English, to colloquial, but very fluent speech. Amritlal copes exceedingly well in any oral situation, and can engage in rapid verbal exchanges and

jokes with people. When he is required to write, he becomes rather sullen and uncommunicative. In February 1989 the researcher engaged him in conversation after a tutorial:

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Do you go to the temple at all then?                    |
| 2  | Amritlal (A)   | No, never.  |
| 3  | R              | But I suppose your parents go?                          |
| 4  | A              | Yes, they both go.                                      |
| 5  | R              | And did they ever put you under any pressure            |
| 6  |                | to go too?  |
| 7  | A              | No. They don't mind. They say I must think              |
| 8  |                | about it, and if I don't believe in all the Gods,       |
| 9  |                | then it is up to me. My mother says more about          |
| 10 |                | it, but not much really. She leaves it up to me.        |
| 11 | R              | Is this the Eastern Lane temple?                        |
| 12 | A              | Yes.  |
| 13 | R              | What about brothers or sisters? Do you have any         |
| 14 |                | who go?   |
| 15 | A              | (smiling) Younger brother. He goes.                     |
| 16 | R              | When did you start to lose interest? . . .              |
| 17 |                | because you must have gone when you were                |
| 18 |                | very young?   |
| 19 | A              | About ten or eleven. When I was young I had to          |
| 20 |                | go anyway because there was no-one to look              |
| 21 |                | after me . . . but I didn't understand it.              |
| 22 |                | I just did the clapping when everyone else did          |
| 23 |                | and like the hymns, I didn't know any words,            |
| 24 |                | so I just sat there.                                    |
| 25 | R              | What about language classes? Did you go to any          |
| 26 |                | of those?   |
| 27 | A              | No, never.  |
| 28 | R              | What about ceremonies like Holi? Do you ever take part? |
| 29 | A              | Don't know. What is that?                               |
| 30 | R              | When you throw coloured powders at each other.          |
| 31 | A              | Oh yes. A bit . . . not really. I know some of the      |
| 32 |                | Gods but not much.                                      |

In this exchange Amritlal emerges as a much more sophisticated oral communicator, using words and phrases grammatically and with ease. In the two longest periods of speech (lines 7-10 and 19-24) Amritlal responds to fairly complex questions.

In the first passage, he is asked whether his parents had ever put him under any pressure to attend the temple. He condenses a number of ideas into several short sentences.

First of all his parents do not have very strong feelings about his attending the temple.

The researcher understands "They don't mind" (line 7) to signify that they would prefer him to attend but do not feel they should put any moral pressure upon Amritlal.

Secondly, they urge Amritlal to "think about it", (line 8), which the researcher understands as the parents encouraging Amritlal to reflect himself on the issues concerned. Amritlal also says (line 8) that he does not "believe in all the Gods". The researcher understands by this a slight feeling in Amritlal that religion as such has some value, but that he is alienated from the superficial aspects of Hinduism, such as the statues of Gods and the rather ostentatious decoration. Amritlal also suggests that his mother tends to talk more about his going to the temple than his father. Amritlal says that his mother "says more about it" (line 9) which the researcher understands to signify that his mother at times tends to encourage him to attend the temple, but without cajoling him. He concludes by saying "She leaves it up to me" (line 10).

Apart from the intrinsic interest of these utterances it is significant that Amritlal is able to express this range of ideas in a few short spoken phrases and sentences. If he were able to write as he speaks then his written English would improve dramatically.

The same kind of pattern is followed in the second longer paragraph. He says first of all, that he was about eleven years of age when he started to lose interest in going to the temple (line 19). He then says that when he was younger he had to accompany his parents to the temple because "there was no-one to look after me" (line 21). The

researcher understands Amritlal to be saying here that even below the age of eleven he remembers not having a great deal of interest in the proceedings, but that he had to go to the temple because there was no-one at home to take care of him. The implication is that by the age of eleven he was considered old enough to leave at home, and thus he was able to act in a more autonomous way and give expression to his lack of interest in the temple.

He goes on to say that he did not understand what was happening at the temple. The researcher interprets this to signify a combination of linguistic difficulties in understanding Gujarāṭi, and also a lack of appreciation of the religious significance of the ceremonies. Amritlal later appears to substantiate the difficulty with understanding Gujarāṭi, when he says in relation to the hymns, "I didn't know any words" (line 23) although this could also be interpreted as a lack of knowledge of which words to sing, rather than an inability to understand their meaning or to pronounce them correctly.

To some extent, the latter seems the most likely explanation since it is improbable that Amritlal would not have learned some Gujarāṭi as he grew up. However, later he says that he did not attend any language classes (line 27) and this may indicate that his parents gave little priority to the learning of Gujarāṭi.

However, it is again evident from this series of utterances that Amritlal is a sophisticated speaker who can express a number of ideas within a short number of utterances.

The distinction that emerges here, of differential competence in written and spoken English has been alluded to in other studies:

Even where the spoken language is fluent and completely acceptable in the school context, permitting success in such exams as 'O' Grades and Highers in Scotland, and 'O' levels in England, pupils and students are generally at a considerable



disadvantage in written English exams both in terms of the language itself and of cultural assumptions and allusions built into the language and into the education system.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to difficulties with written English, J Gundara has commented upon the problems some Asian children have in developing competence in writing their mother-tongue:

There has developed a community solidarity which uses customs, traditions and religion to protect the community against incursions from institutions outside the home. This siege mentality seems to have protected the community from enforced change by the dominant community, but has not allowed the interaction and development of home languages and cultures alongside those of the more powerful English society. As a consequence, many children are only bilinguals orally, since they do not possess writing skills and overall competence in the first language.<sup>9</sup>

One other point emerges from Amritlal's previous dialogue, and that involves his lack of awareness of the terms for particular Hindu festivals. In reply to a question about Holi, Amritlal says 'What is that' (line 29). When the researcher explains the nature of the festival, Amritlal replies that he does take part to some minimal extent. The fact that Amritlal does not know the name for a very popular Hindu festival provides an indication of his level of cultural awareness.

In contrast to Amritlal's prose about the Afro-Caribbean woman in the market, that of Niru indicates a different level of sophistication in terms of writing ability.

1           The white man in the picture looks like he has  
2           never seen a coloured person before. And thinking  
3           where did she come from, and what is she  
4           doing in my country and market. And he also  
5           looks like a working class man and not well-  
6           educated, plus very very confused.

In this short piece of prose, Niru, like Amritlal, portrays the Englishman as having a sense of ownership over his market and his country, and of feeling that the Afro-Caribbean lady is intruding. Niru says "what is she doing in my country and market" (lines 3 and 4). It is interesting perhaps, that both students have this as a feature of their interpretation, when the researcher specifically avoided giving any kind of introduction to the picture, in order to avoid implanting a particular perspective in the students' minds.

Like Amritlal, Niru was also very articulate orally and extremely quick in her verbal responses to other students. It would be difficult for the researcher to imagine Niru being out-manoeuvred in a conversation. In the following extract from a classroom recording taken in May 1989, the researcher is trying to encourage students to reflect on the pressures and difficulties of different jobs. As an example, the researcher suggests students consider the stresses of being a teacher. Niru uses this opportunity to draw attention to the supposed shortcomings of another student in terms of classroom behaviour. The student concerned is called Brian.

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | What else about teaching then?                   |
| 2  | Niru           | Well, students come out with bad                 |
| 3  |                | language and you can't do anything               |
| 4  |                | about it. So you've just got to try              |
| 5  |                | to control yourself at times.                    |
| 6  | R              | Yes, I think that's true really. But it's not    |
| 7  |                | just students . . .                              |
| 8  | Niru           | It is 'cos yesterday . . . I'm not just          |
| 9  |                | picking on Brian . . .                           |
| 10 | R              | But you're going to!                             |
| 11 | Niru           | I was really ashamed yesterday . . . you         |
| 12 |                | ought to hear Brian when he goes asking          |
| 13 |                | stupid questions all the time and drawing        |
| 14 |                | on the board. I really was ashamed for Mr        |
| 15 |                | Pomeroy.   |
| 16 | R              | Brian's keeping very quiet. Are you going to say |

17 anything? Silence is your defence is it Brian?  
 18 Niru He really does mess around in Science Sir.  
 19 [multiple recriminations around the room with  
 20 many students joining in accusations and  
 21 counter-accusations]  
 22 He was running around the classroom effin' and  
 23 blindin' and Mr Pomeroy was in a really bad mood.

The irony of this series of exchanges is that Niru's behaviour, and particularly language, left a lot to be desired in class. Yet here she determinedly redirects the conversation to focus on the alleged misdemeanours of another student. This is done skillfully and deliberately, since it is Niru who first mentions the subject of bad language in the classroom. She starts by making a valid point about the qualities necessary in a teacher when confronted by bad language from students. Niru does not wish the matter to remain as a general issue or to allow the researcher (line 6) to relate it to another context. She rather forcefully interrupts the researcher and starts to relate an anecdote about the poor behaviour of another student in a science class on the previous day. Rather cleverly Niru starts her account with a disclaimer, "I'm not just picking on Brian". The researcher is not quite convinced that this just happens to be an illustrative account which has occurred to Niru fortuitously at just the right moment in the conversation about bad language from students. The researcher understands the series of exchanges in this sense because Niru has defined the topic of conversation and then proceeded immediately afterwards to provide an illustrative example.

Niru's sense of shock and outrage at Brian's alleged behaviour is illustrated by her next remark "I was really ashamed yesterday" (line 11).

There are really two principal understandings of the significance of what Niru is saying. The first is that she is genuinely ashamed of Brian's behaviour and wishes to draw this outrage to the attention of the researcher. For her to be genuinely ashamed, it seems

reasonable that she should not really understand her own behaviour and language in class, for certainly in relation to bad language, it is difficult for the researcher to imagine that Brian's language is significantly worse than that of Niru. The second explanation is that for some reason Niru wishes to draw the attention of the researcher to the shortcomings of Brian's behaviour. This may reflect either a personal vendetta or merely the principle that to accuse someone else takes some of the attention away from oneself, at least temporarily.

The researcher finds it difficult to understand how Niru could be so oblivious to her own bad language, and thus understands the second explanation as being the most plausible.

Niru repeats the sense of feeling ashamed (line 14) and gradually constructs an understanding that Brian is capable almost entirely on his own, of destroying Mr Pomeroy's science lesson.

The interesting features of this linguistic event are that Niru first of all defines the parameters for what she wishes to say, and then over-rides a potential digression by the researcher. She establishes that she is not selecting a particular student to criticise, but rather using his behaviour to illustrate her previous more general point. She finally takes a stance of moral outrage which has the effect of somewhat strengthening her case. The entire sequence is skillfully managed.

There is much evidence that although Niru is reasonably competent at written English, her oral competence is much more sophisticated. In a sense, this is the same situation with Amritlal although his general ability in both spheres is somewhat more limited than that of Niru.



This differential attainment in oral and written modes raises questions about strategies for teaching English to Asian students, and for interpreting and correcting written material. It is argued, for example, that traditional approaches for teaching language which emphasise grammar and syntax in an objectified manner are frequently inappropriate.

Out-moded methods of language teaching, particularly the so-called grammar and translation methods, relate to a view of language which saw it essentially as something written down, a corpus of texts.<sup>10</sup>

To adopt this view of language teaching would involve extensive correction of students' written work and practice at grammatical exercises. There is evidence, however, that both Amritlal and Niru have a different concept of language:

Language is viewed as a social event, or better still, as behaviour, rather than as an object or 'thing'. The pupil learns to use appropriate items of language in appropriate situations. This does away with a mechanical use of language patterns unconnected with reality, a potential danger of an approach that is structural without being situational at the same time.<sup>11</sup>

The use of language as an 'event' is well-exemplified in the use of slang and words which are only understood within a particular sub-culture. This is illustrated by the following conversation which took place towards the end of a tutorial class, and involved the researcher, Niru and a Pakistani boy. This is part of a discussion involving the availability of drugs to young people.

- |   |                   |   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| 1 | Researcher (R)    | Don't you feel it is immoral to be          |
| 2 |                   | dealing in drugs?                           |
| 3 | Pakistani boy (P) | It's OK. We all have drugs.                 |
| 4 | Niru              | I say to me Dad . . . "A bit of drawer".    |
| 5 |                   | He says to me " What are you always talking |

6 about drawers for?"  
 7 [General laughter - much more among the  
 8 Asian students than the English.]  
 9 R What's drawer?  
 10 [General laughter once more.]  
 11 P That's weed . . . drawer like. You roll it  
 12 up . . . you suck it. You can get drugs  
 13 everywhere.  
 14 Niru If you go in the California bar\* . . .  
 15 P Five pounds. Good sniff of drawer.  
 16 Niru Just go in the California bar and just  
 17 breathe in . . . you can smell it  
 18 and you're high.

The researcher was interested in the use of the term "drawer". Apart from learning its meaning and significance, a number of interesting facets emerged here. It was the first occasion on which the researcher had heard a term used by students in the sample, with which he was unfamiliar, for the reason that it was characteristic of a particular cultural sub-group. This might indicate that the students did not normally employ such terms in the classroom, or perhaps alternatively, that there were not many such terms in existence. It may also have been that within an Asian milieu the students spoke Gujāratī and employed slang terms in that language.

It is clear from what Niru says (lines 5-6) that her father is not familiar with the term "drawer" which indicates that it is a word used in teenage sub-culture. In addition, when Niru first mentioned the word it elicited excited laughter among the students, but particularly among the Asian students. The English students smiled but as if they were not quite certain what was being referred to.

The fact that the use of the word caused such instant amusement in the classroom, was interpreted by the researcher as signifying that the mention of the word in the presence of a teacher was rather unusual. The researcher felt as if he had inadvertently been

given access to a secret world - that Niru had, in a sense, broken an unwritten rule not to mention such things in the presence of adults and particularly adults who fulfilled an official role in society.

Secondly, the researcher gained the impression that the English students were unfamiliar with the term and were laughing rather weakly to give the impression that they did in fact understand. There remained, of course, the general possibility that the students were exaggerating their involvement with drugs. The researcher considered, on balance, that Niru and the other student knew where to gain access to drugs, but reserved judgement on the extent to which they purchased and used them.

Language and talk appeared to fulfil a particular function for Satya, specifically in relation to his memories of India. Normally in class Satya was very quiet, reserved and introspective, rarely interacting with other students. The only student with whom he communicated much was an English boy who shared Satya's interest in astrology and various other areas of a broadly para-psychological nature. They both read books and magazines on such matters as telepathy and "astral travel", and then exchanged ideas. Both Satya and his friend would often appear to be working very hard in class, but closer observation would reveal that they were either reading library books on their areas of interest or copying passages from books or magazines.

Satya was always courteous with both teachers and students, but reserved in what he would say. He spoke with a fairly exaggerated Indian intonation, as a result of his relatively short period of time in England. No doubt it was his feelings of lack of confidence in his linguistic ability which caused him to generally remain quiet, but whenever the researcher engaged him in conversation about India, then his personality changed. At once he became excited, lively and bright-eyed. He could scarcely speak

quickly enough to express his ideas. The following conversations took place after lessons in March 1989.

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Do you miss India very much?                            |
| 2  | Satya (Sty)    | I miss India. We have lots of fun. There                |
| 3  |                | is this festival . . . I don't know what                |
| 4  |                | it called . . . it has big wooden                       |
| 5  |                | trolley like this (he makes a shape like $\cap$         |
| 6  |                | with his hands) and it has big wooden                   |
| 7  |                | wheels.   |
| 8  | R              | Is it pulled along this trolley?                        |
| 9  | Sty            | Yes, pulled through village.                            |
| 10 | R              | Is it a juggernaut?                                     |
| 11 | Sty            | Juggernaut <sup>12</sup> (nodding). Very big wheels and |
| 12 |                | many people pull it . . . maybe two,                    |
| 13 |                | three hundred people. But little children they          |
| 14 |                | get too near and play underneath. Sometimes             |
| 15 |                | they get killed.  |
| 16 | R              | Is it a festival to a God?                              |
| 17 | Sty            | Yes, a God.   |
| 18 | R              | Which God?  |
| 19 | Sty            | (thinking). Ram.  |
| 20 | R              | What time of the year?                                  |
| 21 | Sty            | May.  |

The enthusiasm with which Satya always spoke of India indicated to the researcher that he did "miss India" (line 2) and that Satya enjoyed greatly the experience of describing his memories to the researcher, particularly as he knew the researcher had visited India and understood something of the culture.

There is some evidence here which indicates a limited knowledge of traditional Hinduism. Satya hesitates considerably when asked which God is celebrated in the festival of the juggernaut (line 19). On the other hand, this tentative reply may be explained by his relatively distant experience of India.



Satya often used the word 'fun' (line 2) when reminiscing about India, and the researcher always understood this to signify a delight and enjoyment in the open-air life in India. Certainly, on many occasions Satya appeared very despondent about his life in England, but at the same time found it hard to employ appropriate language to describe his feelings accurately. This is illustrated in the following extract:

1	Researcher (R)	You miss all this fun?
2	Satya (Sty)	I miss it.
3	R	Would you like to go back to live in
4		India?
5	Sty	I want to go back, but I want lot of
6		money first.
7	R	You wouldn't want to go back and be
8		poor?
9	Sty	No. You need lots of money in India.
10		I will be multi-millionaire here first, then
11		I go back.
12	R	You really like India?
13	Sty	Sometimes I get this pain in head . . .
14		I think I have something wrong in the
15		head. (Satya speaks very quietly here as
16		if he is telling the researcher something very
17		personal). It is like I am not on this
18		earth. At night I sort of drift off as if
19		I am not lying there . . . I think maybe
20		there is something wrong.

Satya frequently told the researcher that he would like to return to India, but he also appeared to like the stability of English society, and thus no doubt he had mixed feelings. The final section of this conversation (line 13 onwards) is interesting and charged with emotion. Considering Satya's limited experience of English it is expressed in a very articulate manner which transmits much of the profound feeling felt by him.

Where Satya says "pain" (line 13) the researcher does not necessarily interpret this as an actual pain. The researcher felt certain that Satya would have been familiar with the term "headache" and would have used that word to describe a physical pain. The researcher interpreted the word as signifying a sense of confusion, perhaps coupled with some unpleasant sensation in the head. If Satya had suffered from a pain which he felt was more significant than a headache, then the researcher considered that he would have consulted a doctor, but Satya never mentioned having visited a doctor.

Satya certainly interprets the situation as signifying that there is something "wrong" (lines 14 and 20) with himself. He uses the word twice, and the manner in which he uses it seems to suggest that Satya is in some way blaming himself for his condition, or at least accepting or recognising some sense of inadequacy - "I think maybe there is something wrong" (line 20).

The researcher was in many ways deeply disturbed by Satya's unhappiness but was unsure about the usefulness of referring Satya to an agency within the college (eg. the College Counselling Service) or outside the college (by perhaps contacting his GP). The researcher considered that by drawing particular attention to a supposed psychological problem, that a larger problem might in fact be created, or the existing one might be exacerbated. The account by Satya is, however, moving and a good example of emotional speech, particularly so in an unfamiliar language.

A final example from Satya illustrates the difference in exposure to the mass media in England compared with Satya's traditional environment in India.

- |   |                |  |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1 | Researcher (R) | How big is your village?                 |
| 2 | Satya (Sty)    | Three hundred houses.                    |
| 3 | R              | Do they have televisions?                |
| 4 | Sty            | They have two televisions. You can watch |
| 5 |                | but you must pay about 10p to the owner. |

6	R	What is there on the TV?
7	Sty	Indian films.
8	R	Are these from Bombay?
9	Sty	No, from Hyderabad and Madras. They in
10		Telugu. Village people they like television.
11		They have no video - just television.
12		That television there (indicating a standard
13		college television and video system) you get
14		twenty thousand rupee. I going to take
15		TV's to India and get lot of money . . .
16		I be millionaire. When I at school in
17		India, that is a dream, to be millionaire.
18	R	You would like to export TV's?
19	Sty	Export yes. They want TV's very bad in my
20		village. I make lot of money . . . Be millionaire.

It emerges from this account (line 10) that Satya did not have access to the mass media based on the Hindi of Bombay and Northern India. His was a regional culture based on Telugu. He did not understand Hindi and this must have restricted the range of culture to which he had access.

When Satya came to England, not only had he to master a strange language, but the linguistic and cultural tradition from which he came, was that of a minority in his home country. He was isolated from even the Indian community in Churchtown.

The issue of linguistic competence must be central to the way in which students in this sample relate to the world around them, and perform within a competitive educational system. Many reports have voiced concerns about the linguistic difficulties of ethnic minorities, and it seems reasonably certain that the issue will remain for considerable time to come.

Further education should also be encouraged to do more to help those immigrants who arrived in this country in their teens and had only a few years' education here, or those leaving school as educational failures. Many such pupils are highly motivated to gain an education, but do not gain admission to courses because of language difficulties or lack of educational qualifications.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, in terms of the continued use of Asian mother-tongues, R Jeffcoate takes the view that there will be a gradual decline in usage:

I envisage a situation in which South Asians, for example, speak English first and foremost, comprehend something of the language of worship and their sacred texts (Quranic Arabic, for example), perhaps learn 'standard' Punjabi or Gujarati at school as an alternative to French or German and to a similar level of competence, and preserve vestiges of demotic for occasional domestic or informal use.<sup>14</sup>

There is some evidence in this chapter which supports previous generalisations. It is clear that a knowledge of Gujarāṭi is significant to some students. Both Ratilal and Rajendra have learned Gujarāṭi, although Ratilal's lessons have been stopped by his father because of the cost. It seems a reasonable assumption that both of these students find some satisfaction themselves in learning their mother-tongue in a written form, and that it is not simply parental pressure which induces them to attend. There is distinct evidence from Ratilal that he values his competence at spoken Gujarāṭi, because it enables him to converse with his grandparents. This evidence tends to support generalisation (vii) (Hindu students value a knowledge of their spoken mother-tongue).

In terms of generalisation (viii) (Complex linguistic deficiencies and problems of cultural adjustment can affect academic progress, and adjustment to the world of work), it is clear that some students suffer from linguistic deficiencies which are complex in the sense both that the causes are multi-faceted and in the sense that it is unclear which strategy or strategies would be best to remedy the situation.



Ratilal has had to struggle against considerable difficulties in order to attain his competence at English, and Rajendra is having extra lessons at the Swaminārāyan temple. In Rajendra's case, it is unclear exactly the nature of "Bapū's" qualifications to teach English, and the level of his competence at English. One can imagine that there might be a conflict here between some aspects of Bapū's teaching, and the education received by Rajendra at college.

When students such as Ratilal and Rajendra are disadvantaged in relation to the language which constitutes the medium of instruction, then it is clear that this must affect their progress in the education system. There is no specific evidence here to suggest that they are affected adversely in terms of adjustment to the world of work, although this is a reasonable assumption.<sup>15</sup>

There is further evidence in this chapter of the general tolerance of Hindus in relation to questions of religion. Amritlal's parents do not try and put him under unreasonable pressure to attend the Hindu temple, but leave him to "think about it". Although Amritlal is alienated from the conventional practice of Hinduism, his parents do not seek to transform his viewpoint, but place the emphasis upon Amritlal's rational analysis of the situation. This data tends to support hypothesis (i(b)) (The mainstream Hindu students are evolving their own individual religious perspectives within the largely tolerant atmosphere of their temple. These students are more likely to develop a tolerant approach to other cultures and value systems).

Although there is only evidence from two students, Amritlal and Niru, it seems reasonable to assume that in general ability at oral English will be greater than that at written English, particularly for students who have moved to this country during their Primary school years. It would seem plausible that ability at spoken English would develop rapidly as children mix in the playground and make new friends. Written English,

demanding as it does, the regular application of formally-acquired rules, appears a more daunting task. As a provisional statement only, it seems reasonable to suggest:

(xviv)        Hindu students acquire competence at spoken English more rapidly than at written English.

The evidence of Satya representing a separation from England and the English way of life, is interesting, but understandable in terms of the short space of time during which he has lived in England. It seems therefore, a poor basis even for a tentative generalisation.

The final section of data concerns only two students, and during the period of research, no other students mentioned the subject. The data concerns what might best be called the Supernatural.

CHAPTER 10 THE SUPERNATURAL

Although the term "supernatural" carries implications of phenomena which are outside the normally accepted natural laws of cause and effect, it is not part of the researcher's perspective to necessarily assume that what may be categorised in popular terms as superstition, has no basis at all in fact. This general perspective influences the analysis of the data in this chapter, and is explored further in the reflexive chapter at the end of the thesis.

Only two students referred to anything which could broadly be regarded as involving the supernatural, yet for both Narain and Satya these phenomena were clearly a significant part of their lives, and appeared therefore worthy of inclusion in this account.

The researcher is aware that magic and superstition form an essential part of the religious framework of life in rural India, but it is understandable if some of these traditions become lost when people move into a Western cultural milieu. As the data is limited to only two students, it is perhaps reasonable not to use it as the basis for generalisations, but to note its importance to the students, and to regard it as the basis for further explorations to reveal the extent of such beliefs and practices amongst Hindus in this country.

Narain was the first student to mention anything of a supernatural nature, and this took place during a lunchtime conversation in March 1987. Narain and the researcher had been discussing the God Ganesh, and that he was supposed to bring good fortune:

- 1 Narain (N)

2

3

4

5
- Yes he is. [Narain did not seem very

certain of this.] We worship cow

as well. Cow is very holy - milk is

very holy. You must never spill milk ...

that is very bad. Once my elder brother right,

6                    he spilled some milk in the house, and the next  
7                    day we got this telegram saying that our  
8                    uncle had died. It is very bad luck.

What is interesting here is that a connection is made in Narain's mind between spilling milk and the death of his uncle. It is understandable that in traditional Indian society within an agrarian economy, that the cow is esteemed first as an essential element in the economy, and secondly that this view becomes gradually enmeshed within a religious framework.<sup>1</sup> One can understand too how an essential commodity such as milk, becomes regarded eventually from a religious perspective. In a dry and dusty North Indian village during the summer months, one can imagine the scene in a house if a child inadvertently knocked over the only vessel of milk. As Narain says "You must never spill milk ... that is very bad".

Narain clearly feels that when his elder brother spilled milk in the house, that this at least was a factor in his uncle's death. A number of issues remain unexplored in this short piece of data. First of all, it is unclear exactly the nature of the time sequence between the milk being spilled and his uncle dying. It is possible that his uncle died after the spilling of the milk, but irrespective of whether this actually was the case, the interesting issue from the researcher's viewpoint is that Narain feels there was a connection of some kind. Whether he considers that there was a direct causal connection is uncertain, although the researcher's sense of his statement is that he does feel that. The justification for this is that when Narain says "It is very bad luck" (line 8) he is stating that it is bad luck to spill milk, therefore implying that this bad luck has had something to do with the death of his uncle.

The other issue to be considered is that Narain does not appear to analyse the issue of intent. In other words, the spilling of the milk is sufficient to bring about undesirable



consequences, irrespective of whether it was a complete accident or due to serious negligence. There is no systematic attempt to consider the rationality of the situation.

As a corollary to this, the researcher understands the sense of the utterance as signifying that Narain was probably influenced in his views by either parents or older relatives. The researcher understands a situation where the telegram arrives and shortly afterwards the thought occurs to one of the parents or relatives that milk was spilled the previous day. The researcher senses that Narain is repeating a judgement which he has heard from others.

There is also no mention of the undoubted psychological effect upon Narain's elder brother who perhaps quite innocently and inadvertently spills the milk, only to find that his family connects this with the death of his uncle. This would be a considerable burden to bear, and Narain does not appear to have considered this moral issue.

Two months later, in May 1987, the researcher was again in conversation with Narain, and reminded him of the discussion about milk:

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | I know we talked before about                      |
| 2  |                | things which bring bad luck ...                    |
| 3  |                | you mentioned spilling milk ...                    |
| 4  | Narain (N)     | Milk, yes.   |
| 5  | R              | ... well, I wondered if there was                  |
| 6  |                | anything else which brought bad                    |
| 7  |                | luck.  |
| 8  | N              | Black is very unlucky. <sup>2</sup> Black clothes. |
| 9  |                | At a wedding night, the bridegroom mustn't         |
| 10 |                | have a black suit ... same with bride.             |
| 11 |                | Black is very unlucky. He must wear a              |
| 12 |                | white suit, or cream, or some other light          |
| 13 |                | colour ... then it is all right. Also, the         |
| 14 |                | bride puts this <i>mehndi</i> on her hands. (He    |
| 15 |                | gestures to the palms of both hands.)              |

16 R What's that?  
 17 N It is lucky ... it makes an orange mark  
 18 on the hand. It is a green powder ...  
 19 you buy the powder and mix with water  
 20 and it goes orange and then you put on  
 21 the hands.  
 22 R On both palms?  
 23 N Yes, it brings very good luck.  
 24 R Would you buy *mehndi* in England?  
 25 N Yes, in Indian shops. It comes from India.

Here once again Narain demonstrates a conviction in the notion of 'luck' and of the various procedures necessary to attain good luck. There is, however, no analysis of the kind of results associated with 'good luck' and the possible consequences of 'bad luck'. It may be that Narain has some view of this in his own mind, and has simply not articulated it within this conversation. It seems therefore that Narain has inherited a received tradition of what constitutes 'good luck' and desirable action, and is implementing this with very little rational analysis. This serves to point up the complex nature of Hinduism. This is not simply a matter of subscribing to a certain set of doctrines, but of absorbing a complex inter-relating set of beliefs and practices. As S C Dube indicates:

Folklore and myths, religious teachings of the saint - poets, and contact with persons having knowledge of scriptures and popular religious books have all influenced their religious ideology and consequently their religion is a mixture of animism, animation, and polytheism, with the occasional appearance of monotheism also. To these must be added a living faith in spirits, ghosts, demons, witches, and magic.<sup>3</sup>

The subject of astrology and palm-reading was an aspect of a conversation in June 1987.

1	Researcher (R)	Could I just ask you about astrology
2		and palm reading. Have you ever had
3		anything to do with it ... have you
4		ever had your palm read for example?
5	Narain (N)	No.
6	R	Who would do a palm reading? If
7		you wanted to have a palm reading
8		where would you go? Would you go to
9		the priest?
10	N	No, not the priest. Priests cannot do it.
11		You must get training. Sometimes you
12		can see advertised in the magazines ...
13		in film magazines.
14	R	What kind of person would do the palm-
15		reading? Just someone in the community?
16	N	It must be someone who has got
17		intelligence. They can charge about a hundred
18		pounds.

Some of this evidence might be questionable as Narain admits that he has not in fact had a palm-reading. He is quite adamant that he would not go to a priest (line 10) for a palm reading, stating quite clearly (line 11) that training is necessary to perform the function, and by implication that priests either do not receive, or cannot master the required training.

Of course when Narain states (line 10) "Priests cannot do it", this is subject to the interpretation that priests are not allowed by either tradition or hierarchical authority to carry out this function. However, because this statement is juxtaposed with the issue of training, there is the clear implication that in some way priests do not normally receive the required training and are therefore unable to carry out the procedure.

The only other issue about which Narain is certain is that the person who carries out the palm reading must possess "intelligence" (line 17), by which the researcher understands "a perceptive intuition" or a quality approximating to that.

In any case, from an interpretive perspective it is less crucial whether or not Narain is correct in assuming that the priest does not engage in palmistry, than that Narain himself understands this to be the position. It is central to this research study, that the emerging picture of the Hindu students, is their construction of reality. This is what is significant.

Most of the data on the supernatural came from Satya, with whom the researcher had many long and informative conversations. Satya, of all the students, had most recently come from the Indian sub-continent, and therefore his view of life was still significantly affected by his memories and experiences of his homeland.

In his conversations, Satya often seemed preoccupied with the violence of society in India and the rather precarious nature of life. During a lunchtime discussion in November 1988, he recounted a childhood memory:

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Researcher (R) | Have you had any other experience                   |
| 2  |                | of violence?  |
| 3  | Satya (Sty)    | One night I am in the house on                      |
| 4  |                | my own and this man he goes                         |
| 5  |                | round the house and he knock on                     |
| 6  |                | each door. This door it is curved                   |
| 7  |                | (he gestures with his hand) and I                   |
| 8  |                | see the man. He has these red like                  |
| 9  |                | this. <sup>4</sup> (Satya gestures by sweeping with |
| 10 |                | the open palm of his left hand across               |
| 11 |                | his right arm and shoulder.) These men              |
| 12 |                | they cover themselves in oil and then               |
| 13 |                | no-one can get hold of them. He tries               |
| 14 |                | to open the door with a screwdriver, but            |
| 15 |                | I know my parents coming.                           |
| 16 | R              | Where were they?                                    |
| 17 | Sty            | They are watching a film and I know                 |
| 18 |                | they are coming, because I know it                  |
| 19 |                | is the time for the film to finish.                 |



20                      My father comes and he chases the man  
 21                      but he disappears like magic. (He gestures  
 22                      as if demonstrating a puff of smoke.)  
 23      R                      How old were you?  
 24      Sty                      About six I think.

It is easy to imagine the all-encompassing fear of a six year old in this situation in a darkened Indian village in the late evening. What is interesting here is that Satya appears to be explaining the man's disappearance by reference to magic. He is not using the phrase 'like magic' (line 21) in an everyday sense when we wish to use magic as a metaphor for something happening very quickly. Rather, by using the gesture, the researcher understands Satya to be signifying that something supernatural has happened.

Later in the same conversation Satya is more specific about magic:

1      Satya (S)                      There was this girl. They put hen on pathway  
 2                      and cut it up ... cut head off. Then if  
 3                      you walk the witchcraft come up from the chicken  
 4                      and make bad things for you. This girl she died.

From time to time the researcher was concerned whether Satya might be elaborating stories in order to provide the kind of information in which he assumed the researcher was interested. However, there is evidence of the supernatural from other studies. For example, the previous dialogue is reminiscent of *nazar*, a phenomenon which is perhaps translatable as "the evil influence", and which is well-known and feared in village communities. It has been documented by D Pocock:

A woman was once feeding her child and looking at it with great affection. Her mother-in-law fearing for the child, suddenly directed the young woman's attention to the stone flour mill which immediately broke in half. Here there is no question of envy, but of the permanent evil eye unconsciously exercised.<sup>5</sup>

During November and December the researcher held many informal discussions with Satya, often meeting at lunchtime in a classroom adjacent to the library. Satya was never late, usually waiting in the library for the researcher to arrive. In the following two extracts he moves on to the subject of ghosts, and then "devils":

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Satya (Sty)    | In mountains there is river and all             |
| 2  |                | of milk. It very bad place. In the deep         |
| 3  |                | place there is ghosts. You not go there.        |
| 4  | Researcher (R) | You have not been there?                        |
| 5  | Sty            | No. Village people very frightened of that      |
| 6  |                | place.  |
| 7  | R              | Are there ghosts near the village?              |
| 8  | Sty            | Many ghosts. There is this rice field near      |
| 9  |                | village and then row of trees. These            |
| 10 |                | trees very bad place. Many ghosts. If mans      |
| 11 |                | go there they have heart attack. Some mens      |
| 12 |                | they go and they sleep there and wants see      |
| 13 |                | ghosts. This girl she is making pattern on sand |
| 14 |                | at Divali. You get this white sand and it       |
| 15 |                | sprinkle to make very beautiful pattern. She    |
| 16 |                | making pattern and she see ghost in             |
| 17 |                | white ... in village.                           |

This passage indicates in Satya a willingness to accept the beliefs of others in ghosts, rather than any attempt on his part to assess the evidence. For example, in the first account (lines 1 to 3) he appears to accept an improbable notion - that a river is flowing with milk<sup>6</sup> - without suggesting that any supporting evidence might be needed. If he is prepared to accept this, then presumably he is also accepting other peoples' stories about ghosts without questioning them. In fact, he admits (line 5) that he has not visited the place in question.

In describing the existence of ghosts near his village, Satya is quite precise about their location. He describes this clearly and the researcher can accept that Satya himself believes in the existence of ghosts in that location. The evidence that is provided however, is not direct anecdotal evidence. He says (lines 10 and 11) "If mans go there". He does not describe a particular case of a man having a heart attack, but makes a general unsupported claim. In the next sentence (line 12) he says "they go and they sleep there", without suggesting that any of these men actually die of shock and heart attacks. This contradiction seems to support the notion that Satya's belief in ghosts is based upon an unconditional acceptance of other peoples' beliefs. The case of the girl at Divali does not really provide sufficient data to clarify the facts of the event.

1	Researcher (R)	What is it like round your village?
2	Satya (Sty)	Forests there are; and then mountains near
3		Bombay. You can go to Bombay. It takes two
4		days and costs about ten pounds.
5	R	Do you travel much from your village ... in
6		the forests?
7	Sty	No. We not go in forest. There is devils there ...
8		evils run round there.
9	R	What do you mean?
10	Sty	There is very bad mans. They do bad thing
11		if you pay them money. They make people
12		dead ... like witchcraft.
13	R	You mean you can arrange for an accident
14		to happen to someone?
15	Sty	Yes witchcraft. You pay lot of money ... maybe
16		hundred pounds, then person die for sure.
17	R	What about in this country? Do people do
18		this kind of thing here?
19	Sty	You must send photograph. Friend can take
20		it and you give money. Then bad thing
21		happens. They very bad mens. If you no give
22		money, they kill you. Very bad mens.

The researcher is interested here in the way in which Satya describes the malevolent spirits of the forest. He first of all states (line 7) that he does not venture into the forest near the village because "There is devils there". This gives the impression of a general belief in superstition and malevolent forces, but when questioned further Satya personifies these devils as "very bad mans" (line 10). It appears as if he is frightened of people rather than spirits. Satya's interest and belief in "devils" is not at all unusual for the Hindu village context. L S S O'Malley describes a number of such spirits:

They include minor mischievous demons whose tricks resemble those of poltergeists, such as (in Travancore) one called the furnace devil, who breaks pottery when it is being fired in the kiln, another who sets fire to the thatch of houses, a third who throws stones on to the houses, breaks the doors and puts dirt into the food.<sup>7</sup>

Later in the dialogue it is clear that Satya is less concerned about the possibilities of malevolent magic at a distance (line 16) than with the unpleasant people who perpetrate these deeds. Satya repeats, "They very bad mens" (line 21).

Satya was also fascinated by the magic and superstition which he encountered in British magazines which catered specifically for this interest area. At the end of a class in March 1989 the researcher recorded a long conversation with Satya:

- 1

Researcher (R)

I see you've brought some Tarot cards.
- 2

Satya (Sty)

Yes sir.
- [Break in conversation]
- 3

R

Are your parents interested in this kind of thing?
- 4

Sty

They don't know I am.
- 5

R

Sorry ... they don't know that you're ...
- 6

Sty

They don't know I am interested.
- 7

R

They don't know ... they don't know you
- 8

are interested ... I see. Is this sort of thing ...
- 9

... is this sort of thing common in India then?
- 10

Sty

It be magic. They tell your future. They do magic.



11 R What is this magazine "Prediction"? [Researcher is  
 12 examining Tarot cards and magazines which Satya  
 13 has brought with him into class.] [Researcher asks  
 14 about adverts in the magazine.]  
 15 Sty You shouldn't trust these.  
 16 R [Reading from advert] "Now at long last you can possess  
 17 the magic golden Buddha which will bring you great  
 18 wealth.  
 19 Sty These are Buddhas.  
 20 R You don't believe these adverts do you?  
 21 Sty No I don't believe. I not send money.  
 22 R They are asking for twenty pounds.  
 23 Sty I don't send that.  
 24 R They're saying that if you just rub this Buddha  
 25 you'll get money off him.  
 26 Sty I don't believe this.  
 27 R So you don't believe this then?  
 28 Sty No.  
 29 R Is this Aqua Press a good publisher then?  
 30 Sty Yes. It only cost a pound [the magazine].  
 31 R Do you write off for anything? Do you answer ...  
 32 do you answer any of these adverts?  
 33 Sty I do this one. You send off for this magic dust.  
 34 It cost only one pound. She sends you magic  
 35 dust and it get rid of devils in your home.  
 36 Or you send two pounds and you get a lot  
 37 more magic dust.  
 38 R Have you tried any of these though?  
 39 Sty No.  
 40 R Never tried any of them?  
 41 Sty No  
 42 R What appeals to you about all of this? What interest  
 43 does it have for you really?  
 44 Sty I want magic things. I just want to have magic things  
 45 in my hands.

The first interesting revelation here is that Satya is withholding his interest in the supernatural from his parents. The researcher asks Satya twice in order to verify this and Satya repeats (lines 4 and 6) that his parent are unaware of his interest.

It is possible that Satya's parents are simply not interested in such matters and regard them as trivial. This could have been an inducement for Satya to keep his interests to himself for fear of being ridiculed.

Alternatively, he was clearly spending money on his interest - buying tarot cards and magazines - and it may have been that he was afraid of his parents' reprimands for spending money, particularly on what they might have regarded as trivia.

When Satya was asked (line 9) whether an interest in the supernatural was common in India, he replied "It be magic ..." (line 10). He was not answering the question, and it was as if he was describing the aspects of his interest which fascinated him. Satya was interested in the supernatural, because, within the researcher's understanding, he was empowered by his interest. He lived in a world where in many ways he was deprived. He was living away from his cultural roots, trying to read and speak an alien language, and attempting to create a future for himself within an education system which undoubtedly appeared complex and bureaucratic. A sense of powerlessness would be an understandable reaction in this context, and it seemed to the researcher that magic and associated interests provided for Satya an alternative source of power and authority with which he could associate and in a sense, with which he could feel part.

This is conjecture but is somewhat supported by the excited and animated manner in which Satya always discussed these matters, and the inexhaustible interest he displayed in them.

With regard to the ensuing discussion about advertisements in magazines, the researcher was never certain whether he had invited scepticism on the part of Satya. In a sense, by drawing attention to them, there was an implication that they were untrustworthy.

While it remains that Satya (line 15) is the first to draw attention to the unreliability of the adverts, the researcher, by his phrasing of the question (line 20), "You don't believe these adverts do you?", is inviting Satya to express disbelief. In retrospect, the line of questioning is rather dogmatic and inviting a particular response. The result is that it is not clear whether Satya is simply seeking to please the researcher, or whether he has genuine misgivings about the adverts. As he subscribes to the magazines and has considerable enthusiasm for the subject matter, it may be reasonable to suppose that his responses were in some way conditioned by a desire to please the researcher.

This is supported by the fact that a few utterances later Satya concedes that he has sent off for some "magic dust" (line 33) and that "it cost only one pound" (line 34).

It was interesting to note the reason given by Satya for his interest in magic: "I just want to have magic things in my hands" (lines 44-45). First of all it is clear that Satya was raised in a society where the "magical" is accepted as "real". It is thus reasonable to suppose that Satya would sustain this world view for some time in his new country and perhaps seek outlets for his interest through magazines and books.

Satya's final comment above was interpreted however as indicating some conception of power over his environment. This is a subjective interpretation by the researcher based upon the perception of Satya as a person with very little personal influence or possibility of influencing his destiny. The idea of having magical things 'in my hands' suggests a sense in which Satya feels able to control his destiny through magic.

Later in the same conversation, Satya elaborated upon his experiences of magic in India:

- 1 Researcher (R) This is a book from the town library?
- 2 Satya (Sty) Yes.

3 R [Leafing through the book] - ah, there is a  
4 chapter on automatic writing. I've heard of this.  
5 Sty You hold pens, and then make your own  
6 mind blank. Then you are writing and it  
7 works.  
8 R Do you have any friends doing automatic writing  
9 then?  
10 Sty No.  
11 R You don't know anybody that does it?  
12 Sty No. In my village these are *Koya*, they do these things.  
13 R What is Koya? How do you spell it?  
14 Sty er ... K .. O .. Y .. A.  
15 R Are these people who do magic?  
16 Sty Yes.  
17 R Are they bad people?  
18 Sty I don't think so. They're OK.  
19 R I see.  
20 Sty They do things like this.  
21 R Like automatic writing.  
22 Sty They make sacrifices. They kill hens.  
23 R That sounds like voodoo.  
24 Sty They sacrifice to this evil God, so nothing bad will  
25 happen. You pay them and they do it. Sometimes they  
26 sacrifice a goat. They put it in front of stone.  
27 R What is the stone?  
28 Sty It is picture of God.  
29 R Like a sculpture?  
30 Sty Yes.  
31 R Who keeps the God then? Who looks after it?  
32 Sty Priest looks after it. There is frog as well. People  
33 worship it to make rains come for rice. Yesterday  
34 is 6th March, is day for this.  
35 R For the rice?  
36 Sty Frog is Śiva's.  
37 R And this ceremony would happen yesterday?  
38 Sty No, that is in May.  
39 R The ceremony of the frog is in May?  
40 Sty In May, yes.  
41 R And it is for Śiva?  
42 Sty Yes, for Śiva.  
43 R Oh, I see.  
44 Sty And today is Śiva's birthday?



45 R What do they do on Śiva's birthday then?  
 46 Sty They have statue of Śiva on this ... it  
 47 is like kind of trolley.  
 48 R Juggernaut.  
 49 Sty Yes, Juggernaut.  
 50 R Juggernaut.  
 51 Sty They pull it round.  
 52 R You've to be careful you don't get underneath it.  
 53 Sty One person die. They go to heaven if they die  
 54 under juggernaut.  
 55 R Do they? That's very interesting.

There is evidence here (line 5) that Satya is well-read in aspects of the paranormal such as automatic writing. The fact that he says it is necessary to "make your own mind blank" indicates he has read of the techniques used.

Later in the conversation there is ample further evidence of the extent to which Satya is exposed to ideas which would be extremely strange to his fellow students - even to most of the Hindu students.

Firstly he is familiar with the notion of religious preceptors - the *Koya* (line 14) who are the repositories of magical knowledge and praxis. He has been exposed to the idea of sacrificial rites and the sacrifice of animals (line 22) to propitiate evil deities (line 24).

These are notions which today would be associated by most people with either 'primitive' people or with our prehistoric past. Yet Satya exists in a modern educational context - devoted to the academic and rational - and still exists to some extent in this metaphysical world of magic and superstition.

"They go to heaven if they die under the juggernaut" (line 53) represents the values of this metaphysical world in which Satya partially exists.

It is difficult to draw generalised conclusions from the evidence derived from Narain and Satya, yet it remains an interesting and to the researcher, an important body of data. It indicates as much as any other data, the contrast between the 'hidden' culture of some Hindu students, and the Western culture to which they appear to aspire. The interesting questions are how one culture displaces another, and the mechanisms by which this happens. Also, it would be interesting to understand the process whereby aspects of the original culture are retained and influence the absorption of the new culture.

Narain and Satya partially live in a world of magic and superstition of which we, in the West, have retained only the faintest vestiges. We have here a glimpse of our past, in fascinating juxtaposition with the present.

## CHAPTER 11 REFLEXIVE ACCOUNT OF THE RESEARCH

It has become a central feature of accounts of ethnographic research that a description be provided of the context in which that research took place. This description is wider than an account of the immediate data sample and normally includes such features as the personal background of the researcher, the influences which led the researcher to embark on the project and most importantly, the interpretive processes employed by the researcher in coming to an understanding of the data.

Such a reflective account would be interesting for any type of research (quantitative research included) but it is important for ethnographic research because of the nature of the research process. Unlike survey research, for example, there are frequently very few formal hypotheses at the commencement of the research project. A general idea or interest commonly leads to the collection of some initial data, which is followed by a period of reflection, analysis and often a complete redirection of the research effort. It is this rather more diffuse process which it is important to document because it indicates much of the subjective and idiosyncratic approaches of the individual researcher.

This principle is highlighted by many writers, for example, W F Whyte in the methodological appendix to *Street Corner Society*:

But I am convinced that the actual evolution of research ideas does not take place in accord with the formal statements we read on research methods. The ideas grow up in part out of our immersion in the data and out of the whole process of living. Since so much of this process of analysis proceeds on the unconscious level, I am sure that we can never present a full account of it.<sup>1</sup>

And later

To some extent my approach must be unique to myself, to the particular situation, and to the state of knowledge existing when I began the research. On the other hand, there must be some common elements of the field research process.<sup>2</sup>

From the perspective of the interpretive paradigm there are important theoretical reasons why a methodological account of the research process adds significantly to an understanding of what has been achieved. These reasons stem primarily from the indexical nature of social events. When a Hindu student described a particular event as he saw it, that account was indexical to a whole range of ethnographic particulars which might include his upbringing, the religiosity of his parents, his current attitude to college, his teachers, his peers and so on. The subjective methods he employed to interpret the world were indexical to the ethnographic context.

But indexicality applies equally as much to the researcher and to his setting. When the researcher listens to the Hindu student, the researcher formulates his own interpretation of those utterances, and that interpretation is indexical to the ethnographic particulars of the researcher which might include his academic background, general life interests, his job, his relationship with the subjects of the research, the state of the research project and an almost endless list of other particulars.

The researcher's understanding and interpretation of what the student says is not the only possible understanding. It is one of many possible interpretations, and it is a function of these many ethnographic particulars. Thus one purpose of this methodological account is to illuminate some of these particulars.

Therefore, in one sense indexicality can be seen to operate in a sequence with each observer using his or her own members' methods to interpret the utterances of another, but doing so within their own individual ethnographic framework. Besides operating in this sequential manner, indexicality also has important effects in a circular or what is



described as a 'reflexive' manner. Perhaps this can best be described by considering an imaginary case.

Suppose that a Hindu student described a particular class as 'a skive'. This might be interpreted by the researcher as:

- (i) the teacher does not set enough work; or
- (ii) the student is far and away the brightest student in the class and speeds rapidly through any work given to the class; or
- (iii) the student is inherently idle.

There are other possible understandings of course.

The researcher though, as social member, does not work through all of these possibilities in his mind, weighing up the evidence for each, and eliminating them gradually, to be finally left with the preferred interpretation. Rather an immediate and intuitive judgement is made, based on an extremely rapid, almost subconscious evaluation of a whole range of particulars.

Let us suppose that the student said the class was 'a skive' while shaking his head slightly, with an expression half-smiling and half-despondent. The researcher might well judge that the teacher is not setting sufficient work for the whole class and that the student is disturbed by this because he wants to pass his forthcoming exam in that subject. The other contextual particulars might be the researcher's knowledge of the particular teacher and of the diligence of that particular student. In other words, the interpretation of the utterance is indexical to these contextual particulars.

However, it is essential to recognise that these particulars do not exist in some objective realm. They are selected by the researcher as being significant in this particular case. The researcher selects these particular contextual features at the expense of others, using his own member's methods of interpretation and understanding.

Furthermore these methods are influenced by the particular event under consideration. The decision to interpret the student's utterance in terms partially of the researcher's previous knowledge of the teacher, and not say, as an impudent remark by the student, is affected to some extent by the utterance itself and the expression and demeanour of the student when he spoke. In other words, the context is not objective, but is affected by (or indexical to) the social event.

This mutual indexicality is what is normally referred to as reflexivity. E C Cuff and G C F Payne provide a concise summary of the concept:

As we have seen in relation to the concept of 'indexicality', members' sense-making work requires attention to the particular features of the 'context' of social action. Although social actions are seen to be produced 'in' a 'context', this 'context' is in no sense given for it is itself a product of members' sense-making work. For 'context' refers to those very circumstances of the occasion of a social event which members select to provide themselves with a sense of what that event is.<sup>3</sup>

It is a purpose of this account to explicate some of the ways in which this process of reflexivity has operated in this research.

Generally speaking there has been an increased interest recently in classroom-based qualitative research, but as R G Burgess points out:

'there is a dearth of relevant literature on how research is conducted in educational settings.'<sup>4</sup>

Naturally, research reports should and do discuss methodology, but this is normally from a theoretical perspective combined with summaries of data gathering procedures and hypothesis-testing. The how of the research process tends to be discussed in a cursory manner. There is rarely a record of the real, everyday difficulties of false starts, revised plans, uncooperative subjects and many other problems familiar to researchers. In ethnographic research there is a constant interplay between data gathering and the analysis of that data. The process is complex, with many tentative starts; yet this is often the reality of the research act. As J P Wiseman comments:

For me, with the possible exception of the early planning stages, all aspects of the research act are going on almost simultaneously. Early fragments of analysis and of conceptual insights make their appearance both in the organisation or coding of material and in the most current decisions I make about what field material to gather in the future.<sup>5</sup>

The interest and value in reading the reflections of researchers often lies in the directness and honesty of the accounts. Research is not portrayed as a step-by-step, inexorable progression to absolute truth, but as hesitant steps if not in total darkness, at least in twilight. As M Hammersley says:

This is the problem, that one lacks a clear idea of what form the product will, or should take. One is forced to operate instead with implicit, largely intuitive, notions of what is 'good analysis'.<sup>6</sup>

Reflexive accounts, traditionally written in the first person, deal with many often disregarded aspects of research, such as the process whereby the researcher can gain access to the research setting. This is particularly important in educational settings such as schools and colleges, where permission must often be obtained from individuals at different levels in the hierarchy, from the classroom teacher whose cooperation is

essential, through the headteacher to the Chief Education Officer. The help of such 'gatekeepers' is essential to the research process. D H Hargreaves discussed this aspect of research in a well-known reflexive account:

The question of my going to Lumley was discussed with the Chief Education Officer and the Headmaster. On this occasion the nature of my work was briefly explained and the Headmaster consented to the study. However, when I arrived at the school two days later, I was told by the staff that the Head had simply circulated a brief note to all the teachers saying that a sociologist from the University would be coming to work in the school for a short period.<sup>7</sup>

Other accounts add a good deal of detail to the research study by including actual entries from the fieldwork diary. This brings the research process to life by giving immediate access to the thoughts of the researcher at the time. S J Ball, after quoting a short passage from his field notes says:

This rather obscure remark, written in capitals, indicates my intention to cease my haphazard observation of classes and to select and begin to observe a number of case-study form groups.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, reflexive accounts often consider the problems of data collection in the field, and in particular of the researcher trying to remain unobtrusive, and minimising any disturbance of the social ecology of the setting. G Turner records some of the effects of trying to observe classes from the back of a room:

This allowed me to see all pupils whilst my own presence was not quite so conspicuous. However it did mean that I was placed where most deviant behaviour occurred. I was therefore a ready audience. Another problem was that pupils at the back sometimes tried to engage me in conversation.<sup>9</sup>



With these comments as a preface let me start this reflexive account with a brief description of my personal background and the influences which led to the development of this research topic.

I had completed a MPhil degree involving research in the Sikh religion and the ways in which Sikh theology manifested itself in the everyday beliefs and practices of Sikhs. I used some data gathered during a visit to India and also material from many days spent at Sikh temples in Yorkshire. The focus of the research though was distinctly theological, supported by ethnographic data gathered from the Sikh community.

In retrospect this research had gone fairly smoothly and in terms of gathering data the people whom I had met at the Sikh temples had been most helpful. However, it had not always been very easy to explain to people the purpose of my presence at the temple. They clearly wondered what I was doing there, and I normally said either that I was simply interested in the Sikh religion, or that knowing about the religion helped me give support to Sikh students at the college where I taught. Communication was not always very easy, and I decided not to try to explain that I was doing research, because I feared this would be misunderstood and it might be thought that I was intruding or spying in some way. These misgivings were heightened by the enormous respect I had for both the religion and people, and the strong desire not to give any offence.

When it came to selecting a context for my PhD project I was thus strongly motivated to find a situation where I felt I could legitimately collect data and also where the process of data collection might serve a useful function for the subjects of the research as well as for the researcher. This ethical point seemed very important to me.

In addition, quite independently of the MPhil, I had developed an interest over a long period, in Indian religion, in particular the Upanishads and in Buddhism. From a personal viewpoint I was thus deeply influenced by Hinduism and by Buddhism (which developed

from classical Hinduism) and was therefore influenced to select a topic for research which would build upon this interest.

As an aside here, it is therefore essential to mention that the whole of this thesis has been written by someone who has a close affinity with some of the philosophy of classical Hinduism and consequently a strong feeling of empathy for the Hindu students. I always felt that I was writing the thesis almost as a cultural 'insider', as someone who was not only sensitive to some aspects of Hindu culture but who was also in some small way, a member of that culture.

The other major influence in selecting a topic for research was the fact that I was teaching in a tertiary college. I had previously taught in two other Further Education colleges, and had developed a strong interest in multi-cultural education. At Churchtown Tertiary College I taught on a variety of courses including the City and Guilds Further Education Teachers Certificate for adult students and the first year of a degree programme taught in conjunction with the local polytechnic. Immediately prior to thinking about a research proposal I had been asked to develop a college programme for the newly developed CPVE. Many of the students on this programme came from the ethnic minority communities of Churchtown.

From these influences then evolved the idea of examining the world view of a sample of Indian students at Churchtown college. At first I considered the possibility of taking the Muslim students on the CPVE programme as my sample, simply because they were the most numerous ethnic group, and I was fairly certain that there would be no shortage of subjects. However, I knew relatively little about Islam and felt that my immersion in Hindu culture over a period of years was going to be of significant value in the research.

There was, however, the problem that Hindu students constituted a much smaller group in the college when compared with Muslim students and I could not be certain how large a sample I would have for the research. As the idea of a longitudinal study developed, of examining a sample of students on the course over a period of years, I was concerned that I might be 'unfortunate' in some years and find that no Hindu students had enrolled. There were always anxious times at the beginning of each academic year as I scanned the nominal rolls for Hindu names on the CPVE programme! However, the idea of the research programme appealed to me so much that I decided to hope for the best, with the reassurance that whatever happened in terms of sample size would at least represent reality. I was convinced from my knowledge of the numbers of Hindu students in the college population, that given reasonable good fortune, I would have sufficient students from whom to gather adequate data.

The attraction of selecting students from the CPVE programme was principally that I would have relatively easy access to them. The practical matter of locating students during a busy day in a large college campus is an important consideration. As course coordinator I possessed individual timetables for all students on the programme and thus knew on any particular day when a student had a free period. If I was not teaching myself, it was therefore possible to arrange an interview.

It was also important to me that I would have reasons for contacting students. I would not have to either use subterfuge or pose as an academic researcher. I would need to see students about misbehaviour, poor work or good work, examination entries, parents evenings, reports, assessments and all the other minutiae of administration which are part of the academic year.

There was another advantage in using Hindu students on a particular course, and that was that they all had a similar academic background and attainment profile. The idea did occur to me to treat any Hindu student in the college as part of a larger sample, but I felt



on the whole that using students from a single course gave a coherence and unity to the sample, and a sense of sharp focus to the study as a whole. It would also, I felt, enable other researchers to develop my study by looking at a similar course, or perhaps at students on a totally dissimilar course as a contrast.

Another issue which preoccupied me at this time was whether there would be unseen pitfalls in combining the roles of teacher and researcher. This issue has been discussed from a more theoretical viewpoint in the chapter on methodology, but one or two rather more personal reflections remain to be mentioned.

There had never been any difficulty in obtaining official permission to pursue the research. I had received support in writing from the Vice-Principal (Academic Affairs) and the approval of my head of department and of the Principal. In fact, the latter had suggested that he did not mind my using the real name of the college, providing the research was written up in an objective and honest way, as indeed he assumed it would be. This indicates a certain positive support for the project.

One main area of concern for me was that I did not want my research to impinge on the effective execution of my professional duties. I was always aware that my prime concern must be to discharge the duties of my job. Other writers have felt this dilemma:

My role as a teacher ethnographer is temporary; when the ethnography is completed I will revert to my former role as a teacher in the college. Even while I am carrying out my research, I feel that my teacher identity is stronger than my research identity. The teachers in the secretarial section are primarily my colleagues, not research subjects.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps I was being over-cautious but I was concerned lest my interviews with students might either cause them concern or that they might relate to their parents that a teacher



had been asking them questions about, say, their home life. I was well aware of the problems which can arise when a parent telephones the college complaining about a particular interaction between student and teacher. I was concerned that if this happened, then the research project would be jeopardised. This concern, whether justified or otherwise, always made me extremely circumspect when setting up interview situations with students. I was always very careful to explain that they need only say what they were happy to say; that I would turn off the tape recorder whenever they wanted; and that there was no compulsion whatsoever to take part.

In fact, I do not think I really had any grounds for concern, but at least the anxiety caused me to be painstaking in the arrangements for interviews.

I was also concerned to maintain for my research as low a profile as possible. I did not want, for example, students to talk amongst themselves about interviews, or for students to discuss their interviews with other members of staff. I felt that if this type of interaction were to start it would destroy the natural balance of the setting, and I would no longer be certain of exactly the context which I was investigating.

Thus I tended with students not to couch what I was doing in terms of research. I would say, for example, that I was interested in Hinduism and wondered what they could tell me about it. I also said, for example, that if I ever used anything they told me for written purposes, then I would not disclose the source. My approach varied depending upon the student and the circumstances and the subjects which I hoped to discuss, but I was always governed by the general criteria of being truthful and direct without raising the profile of research too much. I did not want what I was doing to appear to students in any way out of the ordinary. In this way, I believed, I would be more able to observe them expressing their natural feelings and thoughts.

This is important within the interpretive paradigm because if a researcher is to make any attempt at revealing members' methods in operation, then he must attempt not to influence too greatly either the subject or the context.

The interpretive paradigm has an intrinsic appeal for me based on my interest in Buddhism. There is a central focus in Buddhism on the impermanence of mind and matter - the way in which phenomena are in a state of continual flux. In relation to the way in which the individual makes sense of the world, this is also the focus of interpretive sociology. As we look out at the world, thoughts come and go continually. We have new perceptions which we interpret to ourselves and to others. This is a continuous process and the way in which we operationalise it is the subject of the interpretive paradigm.

From this follows the existence of an enormous diversity of individual world views. As Hammersley says:

Under the influence of symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology, and ethnomethodology, the primary aim of ethnographic research on schools became description of the diversity and complexity of the perspectives and activities of teachers and pupils, with only sketches being provided of explanations for the patterns discovered.<sup>11</sup>

It is an attraction of interpretive sociology for me that it involves the illumination of these world views. Not only do I find this intrinsically interesting, but the methodology gives a voice to individuals who might not otherwise be heard by people such as lecturers or educational planners.

That we should do this as a matter of principle is an ethical issue, which leads me conveniently into a discussion of the many ethical issues in this research.

Most of the ethical issues arose directly or indirectly through the mechanisms of the data collection process. In general terms it seemed to me that the process of interviewing could easily be misunderstood by students. An interview might be perceived as having another purpose. As J Platt writes:

As several writers have pointed out, however, in an interview to a greater extent than in many other relationships, the two parties may perceive it differently and at least one of them may be ignorant of these differences; in so far as 'role' is a normative concept, not just a behavioural description, the question arises of whose norms are relevant, and how likely it is that they will be shared.<sup>12</sup>

I was concerned that students, for example, might view a research interview as being in some way an assessment of them and be reluctant to say anything. This probably did happen at times, and is clear from the fairly monosyllabic responses at some stages of some transcripts. I did not want these misunderstandings firstly because they did not help the research, and secondly because I did not want students placed under any stress. Apart from trying to adopt a very pleasant and relaxed manner, I attempted to minimise stress by not making formal appointments for interviews. I did this sometimes, asking students to meet me at the staffroom or in a tutorial room at a specified time. As often as possible, however, I contrived a situation when I hoped it would appear quite natural to talk about something with a student.

My preferred pattern would be to go along to a room almost at the end of a class with a piece of administrative information which I needed (genuinely) to pass on to a student, and then use the opportunity to engage the student in conversation. The exchange might proceed as follows:

Researcher	"You know that part-time job you mentioned, how are you getting on with it?"
Student	"All right. There's a chance it might be made permanent."
Researcher	"Well that's interesting. I'm trying to keep records of jobs which students get; could we have a chat about how you got the job. Do you have a few minutes?"

I would then use a nearby classroom, which I knew to be empty, for the interview. I thus tried to let interviews appear to arise naturally from the day-to-day mundane events of a college; so that they would not appear in any way special or different from normal routines. I hoped that data gathered in this way would have more validity, and also that it would minimise stress in the student. In this respect, I hoped the use of a classroom would also help since in comparison with a staffroom it is more neutral territory and does not carry as much the implications of being a "teacher's room".

The question of tape recording raised a number of ethical issues. First of all, for any conversational analysis, it is essential to transcribe tape recordings. Any attempt at taking notes during a conversation in order to reconstruct the talk is liable to introduce some inaccuracies at the very least. At the same time, however, the tape recorder is an intrusive medium and one can never be certain as to the effect it has upon respondents, in terms of making them more cautious about what they say knowing that it is being recorded.

Any possible researcher effects from using a cassette recorder could be almost eliminated by using clandestine recording but I rejected this utterly as being unethical. I simply explained to the interviewee in great detail why I would like to record the conversation, saying that there would be too much information in the discussion to write down as notes, and this method helped me because I could listen to the conversation again and make notes at my leisure. I reassured them by saying that I would not keep the tapes any longer than I actually needed them and would not pass them on to anyone



else. In reality the students seemed little concerned with all of my ethical preambles and usually gave the impression that they just wanted to get on with the conversation.

When I wished to tape record a classroom session I arranged the cassette recorder in a fairly unobtrusive location prior to the class entering the room, and then when the students settled down, I would say something such as:

I'll just switch this on so I can record part of the lesson.

To my surprise no student ever commented on this. When recording a whole class I did not feel it was either appropriate or necessary to rehearse a variety of ethical reassurances to the students. The situation seemed different from interviewing an individual student. I felt this was primarily because in a classroom situation there seemed less likelihood of detailed personal revelations than in a one-to-one interview situation. In addition, in a tape recording of classroom talk, it is not always possible to identify all the utterances taking place at a particular time. Sometimes during transcription, it is necessary to select a particular exchange, or thread of conversation and to focus upon that. The tape recorder simply does not record clearly all of the conversation in a class discussion or verbal exchange.

The preservation of the anonymity of the students and staff was always considered very important. This was not a matter only for the final draft of the thesis, but for field notes and transcripts. I felt a serious responsibility to take all practicable measures to ensure the anonymity of interviewees and respondents.

This is a common concern in ethnographic research, as expressed by Karen Zuga:

If the participants of the study ever read the report, they will probably be able to identify themselves. This matter, however, is between the participants and the researcher with the researcher doing all that is possible to maintain the anonymity of the participants, the research site, and the specific city and state. Using accurate descriptions, but vague references to location, and renaming all participants in the final draft are common practices.<sup>13</sup>

As mentioned in this extract, I was fully aware that total anonymity is impossible, for anyone who knows me could perhaps identify Churchtown college, and hence some of the students. However, by now many of the students will have left the college and their memory will have faded somewhat from the teachers who taught them. I remember them well, of course, but I suspect the teachers at the college would have as much difficulty in remembering them as I have in recalling students who were contemporaries of the respondents in the research.

Another important ethical issue for me was that the data collection process should not be an entirely selfish activity designed to fulfil my ambitions to gain a doctorate and perhaps career advancement. As mentioned earlier, there were feelings of this type which nagged at me while I was gathering data for my MPhil. During this research I genuinely enjoyed talking to the Hindu students. It was always interesting, stimulating and never a chore. Most of the time, it was quite easy to forget the purpose of the interviews, so interesting were the conversations. I genuinely felt that the students, too, enjoyed the experience. Firstly, they gained the opportunity to talk and chat informally with a member of staff who (from their point of view) was clearly interested in them, their culture and what they had to say on all kinds of topics. Secondly, many of the students were able to turn the situation to their advantage by asking me, during the interviews, to either find out information for them about further study; to assist in making applications for courses for them; give them references; and to intervene on their behalf with other members of staff (for all kinds of reasons). Some of these requests I complied with, and others I did not. In any case, some of the students clearly enjoyed the opportunity of trying to manipulate the situation to serve their own ends.

Finally, and most importantly, there was the sense in which the entire research process was psychologically supportive for the students. In many ways, my interviews and discussions amounted to almost open-ended counselling sessions from a counsellor who was on call virtually all the time and always delighted to talk to students.

Many of the students in the sample appeared to me to be social isolates to a greater or lesser extent. Some, such as Satya, were isolated for a number of reasons mentioned in the text, but others such as Narain or Rajendra, did not appear to have a wide circle of friends. For them it always seemed to me that my conversations were a form of counselling support. W F Whyte has written about this consequence of informal interviews:

Like the therapist, the research interviewer listens more than he talks, and listens with a sympathetic and lively interest. He finds it helpful occasionally to rephrase and reflect back to the informant what he seems to be expressing and to summarise the remarks as a check on understanding. The interviewer avoids giving advice and passing moral judgements on responses.<sup>14</sup>

There always seemed to me to be a great difference between the Hindu students and the Muslim students in terms of their social life. There were, of course, far more Muslim than Hindu students in the college and, as one might expect, they had a strong sense of social cohesion. They had often known each other ever since being very young. I remember two students told me that they had actually been in the same form throughout their Primary and Secondary schooling, and then by continuing coincidence had been placed in the same option group on the CPVE programme. The social and friendship bonds for the Muslim students already existed, in a way in which they did not for the Hindus.



The Hindu students were in the minority and although some of them such as Ramesh and Purshottham were extremely outgoing and sociable, many were quite introspective, and clearly did not find it easy to make friends. Often their friends were other students who also to some extent were social isolates.

For these students - and Narain, Balwant, Shanti and Rajendra came into this category - I am sure that contact with me at lunchtimes and coffee breaks helped to reduce their sense of social isolation. In addition, to be on regular, informal conversational terms with a member of staff must have helped their confidence. This seemed to me very important for a student such as Satya.

All in all then, this principle of the social usefulness of the research was very important to me personally. In a sense, whatever the value or otherwise of the final thesis, there was at least some value in the actual process of the research.

I got to know students very well, who otherwise would largely have remained names on tutorial lists. I am sure I helped them, and for their part they brought an interest and value into my job which would otherwise have been missing. The entire process seemed to me eminently worthwhile and satisfactory.

Major ethical issues are involved in the actual process of writing up ethnographic data. Usually, there are multiple loyalties involved and this was certainly true of this particular study. I had loyalties and responsibilities to the students, to the college and my head of department, to my research supervisors, and also to myself, somehow to see the project through in a manner which was not ethically dissonant with my own view of the world.

It did occur to me, for example, whether any of the students could be affected by the completed thesis - by, for example, its accessibility in a library. I would not wish for a copy of the final thesis to be placed in the library of Churchtown college, as it might



encourage attempts to guess the identity of the different respondents. Even if all the respondents had left the college, it is possible that younger brothers or sisters might be students. It is of less concern that the thesis is in the public domain as part of an academic library because there is less likelihood (in fact an extremely remote chance) that any of the material might embarrass respondents. It seems to me acceptable if all reasonable steps are taken to hide the identity of the students, while preserving the accuracy of the documentation.

There is also, I think, a difference between using confidential material of this sort for a research degree thesis, and for publishing it for monetary gain - even if it remains a research study. The philosophical problems here are very complex. Howard Becker feels that the researcher's conception of science is an important feature:

First, his conception of science will affect his action. If he regards social science simply as a game, he must protect the people he has studied at any cost, for his conception of science gives him no warrant or justification for doing anything that might harm them. He will feel a greater urgency if he believes that science can be used to create a better life for people.<sup>15</sup>

If there were ethical problems in relation to the students, then these were also present in connection with data gathered from staff. In this case, the situation was complicated by several features. Firstly, the staff were my colleagues and I clearly owed them my loyalty and respect. Secondly, much of the most interesting data came from informal talk in staffrooms, and it was really unpractical to tape record this. Clandestine recording was out of the question, yet I could hardly ask if I could leave a tape recorder playing in case someone said something interesting! Therefore I tended to keep field notes of interesting comments or situations when these arose.

I found that it was possible to record two or three sentences of conversational exchange with fairly certain accuracy, but beyond this it became almost impossible. The ethical issue arose when I pondered whether I could legitimately use this kind of data when I had not asked the permission of the participants. The dilemma was somewhat sharpened by the fact that I had noted comments of particular interest to me such as when staff made racist or discriminatory comments. I was fairly certain that they would not like these to be documented. This type of problem was also discussed by H Becker:

Trouble occurs primarily, however, because what the social scientist reports is what the people studied would prefer not to know, no matter how obvious or easy it is to discover. Typically, the social scientist offends those he studies by describing deviations, either from some formal or informal rule, or from a strongly held ideal. The deviations reported are things that according to the ideals of the people under study, should be punished and corrected, but about which, for various reasons that seem compelling to them, nothing can be done. In other words, the research report reveals that things are not as they ought to be and that nothing is being done about it.<sup>16</sup>

In a sense the problem was not so serious because I had never intended to report very much data from the college staff. I had always regarded this study as primarily one devoted to the Hindu students and their perception of the world. It was not intended as an ethnographic study of the entire college, and the data I collected was regarded by me as peripheral, and useful only in setting part of the social context within which the Hindu students lived.

I therefore decided to use small selected aspects of the teacher and staff room data, in the hope that as a very small breach of confidence it would not conflict too much with the ethical stance of the thesis. It seemed to me important, for example, to document the fact that racist remarks were not uncommon in staffrooms. I saw nothing to be gained by recording every racist joke I heard, but merely to indicate that this situation did exist. However, I considered it very important to disguise the identity of the speakers by

excluding any ethnographic details about them, and I have every confidence that it would be virtually impossible to identify them with certainty.

Another ethical issue was my practice of artificially initiating discussions during class time. I was particularly sensitive to the effects of starting discussions on subjects such as gender, race, religion, or any other area which brought to the attention of the whole class, some of the distinctive cultural aspects of Asian life.

The reason for this was that inter-cultural relations within the CPVE classes were very good. There was little, if any, racial animosity on the part of any group of students, and I did not wish in any way to risk disturbing this equilibrium.

I felt sure that this harmony and lack of ethnic tension resulted in a large part from the fact that both Asian and indigenous students met within college on a common cultural basis. This was principally because the Asian students did not raise to a high profile their own culture within the college. They dressed in Western-style, fashionable clothes; discussed sport and pop music, going to the snooker hall or the pub, and doing deals on stereos and hi-fi equipment. They did not focus on their cultural differences. It is true that when in large groups or on their own (ie. with no indigenous students present) they would speak in Gujarati or Urdu but generally, if indigenous students were present, English would be the medium of conversation.

The effect of this pattern of behaviour was that I am certain, the English students knew little of Asian culture or religious background. They accepted Asian students as they found them, that is, within a British cultural context.

If I raised issues such as gender roles in Asian society and the differences with traditional British society, then I was in effect inviting the British students to see the Asian students in a new light; to see them as different, with a different value system. I was concerned



that this might cause a polarisation of the two student groups, and perhaps even a breakdown of friendships.

I never came across any direct evidence that my fears had any basis, but I do think some British students found it strange perhaps that I should return from time to time to the same themes. Their reaction was usually one of boredom and non-participation.

As I have suggested previously, one of the main purposes for raising these issues in a classroom context was to give girls the opportunity to comment and thus enable me to collect data. I had decided not to interview girls on their own for fear of either embarrassing them or in case something was said to their parents who might not understand the purpose of the interviews. The class provided both them and I with a neutral context within which to explore these issues.

A concern related to the matter of starting class discussions was that some students might wonder why I was spending so much time talking to Hindu students. The last thing I wanted was for students to start asking "What's Mr Oliver doing?", "Why's he always talking to so and so?" There was also the danger that my time spent with Hindu students might be interpreted as favouritism. To try to obviate these possible criticisms I would from time to time mention in class my interest in Asian religion, in order to place my questions to students on some sort of clearly explicable basis. Secondly, I sometimes interviewed Muslim students, not because I wanted the data (although it was sometimes relevant to the situation of Hindu students) but because I did not want my classes to feel that I was interested in one narrow group of students.

A difficult situation which can arise in field research is when the researcher is confronted by a situation which he feels he would like to change or stop, yet this means the



cessation of data collection. There is, in other words, a role conflict between that of researcher and that of what we might call social participant.

An example from this project was the incident when a Muslim student referred to Shanti's tilak mark by saying 'Indiana Jones and the Temple of Dot'. From the researcher's point of view, I was interested in letting the situation develop because it would possibly shed light on attitudes within the Asian community. On the other hand, Shanti was clearly very discomfited by the remark, and I knew did not possess the verbal skills to stand his ground. For this reason, as social participant, I decided to put a stop to the situation.

A similar problem occurred when students started to speak about members of staff. My own view of this as a teacher was to end this discussion very quickly and, in fact, not listen to such comments. This was part of my own concept of professionalism.

However, I decided to amend my stance slightly because I considered the attitudes of the students about other members of staff so interesting for the study. I thus decided that if a student started to talk about a colleague then I would listen but without passing any comment on what was said. I would let the students finish whatever he wanted to say, and then state that clearly I could not pass comments about a colleague. In this way, I somewhat salved my own conscience and at the same time collected valuable data on students' perceptions of the teaching staff.

However, when it came to the decision to include some of this data in the thesis, I realised that much of it would reveal the identities of the staff. This was a deciding factor in selecting the data to be included, so that anonymity could be preserved. I did not feel that this resulted in a distortion of the thesis, only that in places, supportive data was not included.

It is always difficult to know, when carrying out interviews during field research, exactly the state of mind of the interviewee. This was particularly true of this research study because I could never be certain to what extent students were willing collaborators or to what extent they were assisting me simply because I was their course tutor, and they felt that they had to be helpful. No student ever mentioned that they had been interviewed before in this type of study and I often wondered exactly what they thought of one of their teachers asking questions of them in this way.

A V Cicourel has written about the difficulties of knowing the thoughts of the respondent:

Depending on the topics covered, in casual exchange between two persons or between an interviewer and respondent, the concern with revealing oneself can vary tremendously. It is difficult to know whether the respondent is not playing the same game as the interviewer - withholding feelings and conceptions both about the other and about the topics covered.<sup>17</sup>

This kind of problem was at the forefront of my mind during the periods when Satya was providing data on the supernatural and on life in and around his village. It occurred to me that he might sometimes embellish the truth to make what he said more interesting to me. I was concerned that by exaggerating what he said, Satya might be attempting to enhance his own self-image and importance by being the purveyor of stories and anecdotes which his tutor clearly wanted.

All that I can say is that in ensuring the reliability of data of this kind, the first step is the awareness that there is the possibility of a problem; secondly, one can check data to some extent by referring the respondent to something he said some time previously and ascertaining whether the story is upheld or changes in some significant way. Thirdly, there is the circumstantial evidence that nothing which is said should be completely

contrary to what one might expect of the situation. For example, Satya said nothing which I would find improbable, based upon my knowledge and experience of travelling in India. By these different yardsticks it seems reasonable to suppose that Satya was telling the truth.

In conclusion, I would like to return to an issue which I mentioned near the beginning of this account and that is the extent to which I empathised with the position of the Hindu students. This is not a study of an arbitrarily selected social group, but of a group of students selected certainly for practical and educational reasons, but significantly because they interested me, because I was involved with their religion, and because I felt I had a commitment to Indian culture.

Thus, when Satya was dismissed from his work placement at the bank, I chose to see the situation from what I thought would be his perspective, and this put me in conflict with my colleague who would have failed Satya for not completing an obligatory part of the course.

Inevitably, I think, a research study which involves immersing oneself in a particular culture can only be sustained if one has a certain sympathy for that culture or at least develop such a sympathy. This must to some extent distort the picture which is built up. But it is part of the interpretive approach that nothing is objective. We construct and rebuild our vision, doing our best to portray the world with some truthfulness.

## CONCLUSION

In reviewing the development of this study it seems a reasonable strategy to reconsider the initial aims of the research. The general aim is "to describe the behaviour and attitudes of a sample of Hindu students in a Further Education college and moreover to reveal and analyse their perceptions of the society in which they live".

It was a matter of concern to focus upon a particular ethnic or religious group on the assumption that there would be a distinctive world view to record and analyse, rather than if the sample had been simply a group of 'Asian' students, or even more so, 'ethnic minorities' - taken to include both Asian and Afro-Caribbean students.

The general aim above was subdivided into two more specific aims. The first was to describe the students in "the context of their lives as Hindus and as inheritors of a particular religious tradition". It was intended within this framework to examine such issues as Hindu family life and its impact on the education of the students; the interaction between the students and the Hindu temple; the extent of discrimination and racism; and the importance of the mother-tongue in establishing cultural continuity.

It was the assumption of the interpretive approach to this research that the students would construct and reconstruct both for themselves and for the researcher, their sense of reality and the meanings which social events had for them. It seemed important and worthwhile that these social constructions be recorded both for their value as a cultural record of what it signifies to be Hindu, and also because of the importance of recording the negotiation of reality between a particular group of ethnic minority students and their teachers. G Driver and R Ballard express it like this:



Every effort must be made to understand what transpires in the course of these interactions, and especially the way in which teachers and pupils of different sorts negotiate with one another, ordering their behaviour in terms which have evolved in specific, but differentiated, cultural and social contexts.<sup>1</sup>

The second aim was to attempt to reveal on behalf of the students 'their' perceptions of what it is to be a further education student in the 1980's'. The researcher was very familiar with the Further Education context before the research started, and although this background was very useful in many ways, it was essential to attempt to reveal the particular and special meanings which were attained by Hindu students. It was a fundamental assumption that the meanings evolved by Hindu students would be significantly different from those of other student groups, and also that these meanings must develop in a unique way, dependent partly upon interactions with the researcher, who was for these students a significant individual in terms of defining the nature of Further Education. As course tutor the researcher produced definitions of desirable student conduct; of acceptable student speech; of work standards and attendance patterns and many other aspects of what for the students was their Further Education. Other students in the college would have experienced a different Further Education defined by their interactions with tutors. The researcher's definitions were also partly conditioned by the social constructions of the students. The purpose of the research was to reveal in operation this living, organic dialectic. As M Greene writes:

Qualitative research is concerned with meanings as they appear to, or are achieved by, persons in lived social situations. Research of this kind cannot be carried out by people who see themselves as detached, neutral observers concerned with the kinds of observation, measurement, and prediction that are presumed to be unbiased, unaffected by the inquirer's vantage point or location in the world.<sup>2</sup>

At this stage it is worth restating the generalisations which have been drawn from the data of the various chapters.

- i (a) The Swaminarayan students share a coherent and distinct theology which is reinforced by the value system of the temple.
- i (b) The mainstream Hindu students are evolving their own individual religious perspectives within the largely tolerant atmosphere of their temple. These students are more likely to develop a tolerant approach to other cultures and value systems.
- i (c) For students from both traditions, the experience of Hinduism is to a greater or lesser extent, a significant feature of their lives.
- ii (a) The attainment of formal academic qualifications is an important motivating factor in student attitudes to the educational system.
- ii (b) Some Hindu students aspire to apparently unrealistic educational and vocational goals.
- ii (c) Students are eager to discuss their educational progress with teachers.
- iii Hindu students tend to accept as legitimate the authority of schools and colleges.
- iv Hindu students appear to prefer a formal, goal-oriented educational system, and this attitude is reinforced by the attitudes of parents and relatives.
- v Hindu students seek work which has a high social status within the community.

- vi Hindu students perceive education as an important means of upward social mobility.
- vii Hindu students value a knowledge of their spoken mother-tongue.
- viii Complex linguistic deficiencies and problems of cultural adjustment can affect academic progress, and adjustment to the world of work.
- ix Hindu students demonstrate the capacity to define long-term educational and vocational goals, and to show sustained hard work and determination in order to try to achieve those goals.
- x Hindu students can display a dynamic, innovatory style in the pursuit of short-term vocational goals.
- xi Hindu students appear somewhat reluctant to discuss racial discrimination in a group situation, but are normally willing to do so on an individual basis.
- xii Hindu students try to avoid work situations where they feel they will be subject to racist behaviour. This factor can have a significant effect upon career plans.
- xiii Hindu students are the subject of racist staffroom remarks and "jokes".
- xiv There is no significant evidence of religious conflict between Hindu and Muslim students.

- xv Hindu girls consider that girls and women should adopt an active, participatory role in society.
- xvi Hindu girls do not accept traditional gender roles uncritically.
- xvii Hindu parents attempt to reinforce traditional gender roles, as they perceive them.
- xviii Social pressure exists within the Hindu community to encourage conformity within traditional gender roles.
- xviv Hindu students acquire competence at spoken English more rapidly than at written English.

On reading through these generalisations which have emerged from the data, it seems reasonable to group them within broad themes. For example, statements i (a), (b), (c), vii and viii, relate in different ways to Hindu religion and culture and raise issues which are somewhat related.

There is first of all the fundamental question as to whether there is a distinctively Hindu vision of the world and in particular, of the educational world. The absence of comparative data with other cultures makes it somewhat difficult to resolve the question in any absolute sense but there remain significant indicators of a unique Hindu perspective.

When Narain was a school pupil at All Saints School (Chapter 4) the teacher encouraged them to produce an art project for Christmas. Narain recounts how he painted pictures of Hindu Gods and Goddesses and that the teacher "didn't mind". From the evidence we have, this seems to be an exemplary case of religious tolerance, with the teacher in a



Roman Catholic-aided school supporting the painting of Hindu Gods and Narain implying from his dialogue that he accepts in principle the authority of the teacher to tell him if such paintings are unacceptable.

Although many of the student sample were outspokenly critical of certain aspects of college life there remains the general feeling that they are normally reluctant to set themselves against the authority of teachers, and one suspects, of anyone in the wider society whom they perceive to hold some degree of status.

The question of Hari fasting (p116) also appears to demonstrate a singularly Hindu perspective. This is not unified systematic fasting of a similar nature to Ramadan in Islam, but more of an individually negotiated practice which appears to have the intention of disciplining the mind and thus enhancing performance at college.

Part of the difficulty in elucidating what we might call the "world view" of Hindu students lies in the brevity of the respondents' comments on issues which are extremely interesting and on which much more detail would ideally be desirable. For example, when inquiring about the real function of fasting, Hari provides a rather restricted explanation: "To do better in my Maths ... better in my college work" (p116).

What is not available to us, is any indication on the part of Hari that he has either thought about the mechanism by which fasting brings about an improvement; or what that mechanism might be; or even whether Hari is absolutely convinced that there will be an improvement. It may be that Hari thinks of fasting as a form of mental discipline or perhaps he assumes that it has a form of psychological effect. Here, we are in the realms of conjecture.

In research of this type we have only the account of the respondent and too much conjecture is perhaps antithetical to this approach. As C Adelman and M F D Young point out:

Research of the interpretive type takes actors' (research subjects') accounts as valid as descriptions and for constructing categories of action within a particular culture (be it at home or school).<sup>3</sup>

The importance of Hinduism to the students is illustrated by the reaction of Ramesh to questions about his religious belief (p124). He says for example that he has a copy of the *Bhagavad Gītā* at home and reads it "a bit sometimes" in English translation.

Now Ramesh is an extremely fashionably-dressed young man who might reasonably be described as a member of the Churchtown teenage sub-culture. If a non-Asian teenager were asked about his religion and the reply was received that he kept a copy of the New Testament and read it sometimes, then we might be mildly surprised.

Yet Ramesh has clearly not relinquished his religion. The *Bhagavad Gītā* does not contain the stories and parables of the New Testament, being for the most part philosophical advice on how a human being ought to conduct his/her life. It would normally have little appeal to a teenager unless they were interested particularly in the great moral issues of life and possible means of resolving them.

One might tentatively conclude then, that there has been something in the upbringing of Ramesh which has caused him not to have a closed mind to the world of the spirit and of religion. He has not totally rejected this world, even though he may not subscribe to its more material manifestations at the Hindu temple.

It might be suggested that the importance of Hinduism for the students in the sample was primarily concerned with the social function of attending the temple. This cannot, however, be entirely the case, for when Ratilal was asked how often he attended the temple, he replied that it was unnecessary to go to the temple very often because his family had a shrine in the home, and prayers were said there (p140).

Such shrines are very important to Hindu families. The researcher knows several Hindu families where the shrine in the home occupies a central place in their lives. In the case of one family, photographs of deceased relatives in ornate gilded frames hang over the fireplace, decked in gold and silver glittering streamers of the kind placed on Christmas trees. Statues of the Gods stand on the mantelpiece below the photographs. When adults come back into the home from a shopping trip or visit, their first action is to stand before the shrine and say one or two brief words of prayer. This is done even before greeting visitors to the house.

For Ratilal then, there appears to be more to his religion than merely the existence of the temple as a place to meet his friends and perhaps worship the Gods and Goddesses. Worship is also an integral part of his home life.

A further dimension to this is provided where Ratilal recounts that his parents speak virtually no English (p294). One would have supposed that they would have been very dependent upon the Hindu temple for social contact but clearly this cannot have been so. They must have been able to make an adequate number of contacts with people in the community through speaking Gujarāṭi, without the need to attend the temple. It is clear that Gujarāṭi was very important in providing Ratilal with a means of communication with parents and grandparents, and therefore with cultural continuity with his roots in India. Undoubtedly at home, Ratilal is exposed to conversation which not only through its medium, Gujarāṭi, but through content too, is essentially Hindu - comprising observations on the British way of life, problems of adjusting to life in this country and numerous

reminiscences about life in Gujarāt. In this sense one might suppose that Ratilal is seeing British life through the cultural filter of what it is to be a Gujarāti Hindu.

It seems reasonable to suppose then that the students in the sample do look at life from a distinctively Hindu point of view and that this cultural background is important to them. It is possible then to develop here two theoretical categories. The first is to be termed "the Hindu vision" and reflects the existence of a particularly Hindu perception of the world. The second is to be described as "culture value" and is a category reflecting the importance of Hindu vision to the students in the sample.

In the data obtained from the students there is a wealth of evidence pointing to a particular type of response to the educational system and to the issue of intellectual effort in general. General conclusions ii(a), (b), (c), iii, iv and vi all indicate a particular kind of approach to education.

As part of this general approach there is a profound interest in, and respect for, learning and academic endeavour. This is accompanied by a respect for the institutions of learning and for teachers.

When asked about justifications for staying on at college and studying further, Hari expressed his reasons very clearly. Indeed these are reasons which would have applied to many students in the sample: "when I left school I didn't have good qualifications, and I didn't think I would stand much chance of getting a job" (p167).

There are two issues which appear to emerge here. Firstly there is no sense in which Hari assumes that because he did not achieve a high level of academic qualifications on leaving school, that this is a situation which he need accept. He has an unfailing faith in the educational system and in the rewards of his own hard work. He never seems to



make the connection between innate ability and achievement. It is as if the only variable which is of consequence is effort. This desire to succeed in education is reflected in the theoretical category "educational achievement".

The other view which emerges is that of education as the main route to a "good" job. There is very little evidence in the sample that education is pursued for its own intrinsic worth. In general, it seems as if students do not study subjects because they are fundamentally interested in them. There is always the impression that education is pursued for functional and pragmatic reasons connected with the pursuit of a particular goal. Normally this is a vocational goal but some students mentioned another goal - that of marriage. Hari said, "Also when I make a marriage it is very important for us to have good education" (p167), and Narain said "We advertise the education we have had and then we get a good bride" (p169).

Of course, in British society there is clearly a connection between education and marriage prospects. This is in the sense that educational attainments have some bearing upon employment prospects, which in turn are no doubt one factor in some marriage arrangements.

Educational attainments and economic prospects appear to be closely linked in the Hindu perception. Narain says that Hindus "advertise" their education, meaning that when adverts for a bride or groom for an arranged marriage are placed in the Hindu press, one of the most important descriptors of the young people concerned is level of education. The assumption here is that academic attainment correlates with many other personal and family characteristics. A continued college education for son or daughter may indicate that the family has the financial resources to support children in Higher Education. Formal academic qualifications are valued as substantive evidence of social status and as such are documented and spoken of throughout the community. Marriage is perceived much less as an emotional attachment and more as an economic

arrangement which must be clearly planned in advance and in which the educational levels of the two partners are an important consideration.

Compared with British society we can perceive here a different scheme of interpretation of education. In Hindu terms it is practical, functional, related to vocational aims rather than to a sense of personal fulfilment, and the formalisation and quantification of attainment levels are important factors in the ways in which education is spoken of and perceived within the Hindu community. This tendency towards viewing education in a functional manner suggests the theoretical category "Educational pragmatism", which reflects what appears to be a particularly Hindu conception of education.

Without overstressing this particular study, the general importance of this type of ethnographic work is that it makes available to teachers, the student's stock of knowledge about his/her own culture and the way in which this inter-relates with the education system.

G Hitchcock and D Hughes have emphasised the way in which social interpretations are shared between individuals:

Ethnomethodologists stress that the social world is made up of shared meanings and shared viewpoints. So much so that if actors changed places they would quite likely see the world in much the same way and that our knowledge of the world is generated through interpretations.<sup>4</sup>

The important question seems to be not whether if teacher and student changed places they would have the same perception of the world, but rather that now, in this situation, they are able each to make plain their social understanding and to negotiate meanings which have significance for each other. If the teacher appreciates fully the importance of gaining qualifications, to the student who is planning to marry then this is an important

piece of information for the teacher. It may help her/him to understand why the student is continually coming to the staffroom; why he is asking for extra help or tutorials, and many other facets of the student's behaviour pattern around college.

Perhaps the clearest example, and in some ways the saddest, of a student striving urgently after formal academic qualifications was that of Balwant (p181). He was not a very assertive individual, yet he persisted in gaining entry to a GCSE Mathematics class. On a superficial level he was rather a nuisance to the teaching staff. He did not comply with the formal administrative system which had been set up in the college, and indeed subverted it by finding his own class. Yet his actions hid a fundamental inner anxiety, which gradually emerged during discussion. Parental pressure was creating a situation where Balwant simply could not go home and say that he was not in a GCSE Mathematics class. Once this understanding of the situation was achieved by the tutor, then Balwant's actions became understandable.

The series of discussions and interviews with Balwant revealed that in his case the category which we might call "parental concern in education" was very important in influencing his behaviour at college. On the other hand, it must be said that in the case of Niru, there was very little evidence that this category had any effect other than in a minimal sense. Nevertheless the category appears to be useful in analysing the response of Hindu students to the college environment.

The category could be the subject of much further clarification. For example, it would be very interesting to explore whether the category was a function of being an "immigrant"; or a function of being "Asian"; or in particular a function of being a member of Hindu society.

This process of interpretation is very important for the teacher-researcher for it is at this stage that the social actor's frame of reference is clarified. As D Hopkins writes:

This [interpretation] allows the teacher-researcher to give meaning to a particular observation or series of observations that can lead profitably to action. In doing this, the classroom researcher is creating meaning out of hitherto discrete observations and constructs.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of Balwant, much useful action could emerge from the interpretation. Firstly, the pressures upon Balwant could be understood more clearly and if the findings of the research were disseminated amongst the staff teaching him, it might change in some way the perception of Balwant's situation by the teaching staff. Secondly, the category of "parental concern in education" might help the teacher in relating to other Hindu (and perhaps generally, Asian) students and understanding their perceptions of the college system.

One is left with a feeling that a very important category of action for Hindu students is the need to obtain formal academic qualifications. No doubt, parental pressure contributes to this but there are certainly other factors which can be more closely identified with the individual student. There is, for example, the wish to make an "appropriate" marriage and also the relationships between academic success and attaining a "desirable" profession.

From this desire for qualifications may stem the general attitude of respect for teachers and the educational system which is evident in Hindu students. There may be here a simple sequence of causality. The students seek jobs with high remuneration and status. Good qualifications are needed for such jobs. As teachers assist in the obtaining of such qualifications, then they should be cultivated and respected.



There may be many other factors, however, which are important in generating the respect which Hindu students evidently have for the educational system. The inherited experience of colonisation may be one factor. During the days of the Raj educational qualifications would have been a significant factor in obtaining high status posts in the Indian Civil Service, and it may be that this respect for education has been passed on generation to generation.

This feeling may have been emphasised by the experiences of immigration and the feeling that if one was a professional then one would be less subject to exploitation as cheap labour. In parallel with this, there may also have been a feeling that a good education was to some extent a protection against the worst excesses of racism and racial discrimination. If one was articulate and educated, then it would be possible to defend one's case and appeal across cultural boundaries to educated Englishmen of good faith.

There may be various combinations of such explanatory factors at work here, and there is clearly the possibility for much future research.

Subjective evidence indicates that amongst Indian and Pakistani Muslims there is a similar respect for education, which appears to suggest that there may be factors at work here, which represent some aspect of the Indian sub-continent. On the other hand, there is again some circumstantial evidence that currently some Muslims are suspicious of Western secular educational systems and thus there may well be a point of departure here between Hindu and Muslim.

The general evidence outlined above suggests two categories in relation to Hindu students and the education system. The first is the rather specific aspiration towards gaining academic qualifications. This category might be termed "need for certification".

The second category reflects a theme which emerges throughout this research. This is the general interest in education and respect for the entire enterprise of education. This is accompanied more specifically by a respect for teachers and educational institutions. This category may be termed "educational orientation".

Another group of empirical generalisations concern the Hindu response to the world of work. These generalisations are v, ix and x and broadly speaking concern the student's desire to gain a career which has high social status. There is also evident a determination to succeed which often manifests itself in terms of continuous hard work.

The desire for high status jobs often revealed itself in apparently unrealistic ambition. Ratilal spoke of wanting to do a degree course in accountancy when he was ungraded at CSE Mathematics. The issue of unrealistic aspirations is rather difficult to evaluate, because it clearly involves a degree of the teacher superimposing his own evaluation of the situation. One might legitimately ask which definition of reality is correct. If the aspiration seems reasonable to the student, or, if it results in positive psychological states such as the motivation to work hard, then perhaps the student's definition of what is realistic is the important definition.

On some occasions the Hindu students demonstrated that they could react positively to a vocational opportunity which others might have disdained. Subhash worked at Woolworths on Saturdays and whereas some students may have regarded this merely as weekend work and not worth trying to develop into a career, Subhash clearly saw opportunities here. He arranged his own work experience programme, gaining experience of accounts work and computerised ordering procedures. The impressive aspect of this was the enthusiasm demonstrated by Subhash and also the vision to transform what some might regard as temporary, part-time work into a career possibility with great potential (p216).

A picture begins to emerge of Hindu students striving very hard indeed for jobs which they associate with high social status. This sometimes leads to elevated aspirations - perhaps beyond what most people might regard as reasonable expectations. Perhaps one might put it simply that there is a motivation to "succeed", and this 'success' is perhaps best interpreted in some context which relates to social status. The level of earnings cannot be the sole criterion here, for Subhash could no doubt have envisaged higher earnings working say, for a bookmaker, but presumably, the idea of being involved in management in a large store carried some notion of being a worthwhile occupation and of having some social status.

Arguably then, it is reasonable to assert a category which reflects a need to achieve. Let this category be termed "desire to succeed".

Racism and racial discrimination were not topics which emerged frequently during the research, most notably because there seemed to be some reluctance to discuss them in a group or class context. The student comments on racism emerge from generalisations xi, xii and xiii.

For example, Subhash and Laxmi did not participate at all in a class discussion on racial discrimination (p237), yet a few days later Subhash discussed the issue with the researcher quite openly, in a one-to-one situation.

Perhaps this is not too surprising. The experience of receiving racist comments must be so traumatic that it may well be that one does not want to discuss it openly in groups, for fear that there may be comments which do not help one's own adjustment to the situation. Possibly in a one-to-one situation however, the student perceives less risk.

The incident where a Muslim boy referred disparagingly to Shanti's *tilak* mark (p242) indicates that racist remarks are not exclusively made between say, white and Asian groups. The demarcation line between the kind of name-calling which takes place ordinarily in educational institutions and specifically racist name-calling may sometimes be a fine one. In this case, it seems to be specifically racist since a particularly ethnic characteristic is the subject of the comment.

The existence of racist humour in the staffroom was a particularly disturbing aspect of the research. The Hindu students in general, were known to be hardworking and diligent in comparison to their peers, and yet were still subject to petty, trivial, un-funny, racist humour. One can only conclude that some members of staff saw them first and foremost as a member of a particular ethnic group and one moreover which was the legitimate subject for racist jokes. The students were not seen principally by these people as "students", and hard-working students at that, but rather as "blacks" or "Asians" and as such suitable as the subject for humour.

As mentioned previously, there was some difficulty in gathering reliable data on the extent of discrimination and racism, but there was some mention made of the influence of racist comments in influencing students to relinquish jobs. Ratilal described the experiences of Balwant in being subject to racist name-calling and deciding to leave a supermarket job (p246).

The evidence that students are reluctant to discuss racism and appear slightly dismissive about it in conversation, coupled with the evidence that they do sometimes (as above) take action upon it, suggests the generation of a theoretical category which reflects the degree to which the students can tolerate racism. There would appear to be a philosophical acceptance of racism up to a certain threshold, beyond which it becomes unacceptable. This may be termed "racism threshold".



This is not to suggest that in any way racism is regarded as acceptable but simply that it is perceived at certain minimal levels as an unavoidable facet of life.

The generalisations on gender reveal a clearly-evident trend. There is on the one hand considerable evidence that the girls in the sample are subject to parental and family pressure to conform to traditional gender roles. On the other hand, it is clear that the girls in the sample are not totally uncritical of these expectations.

Pushpa (p264) in giving the example of cheerleaders in American football, demonstrates a quite sophisticated awareness of gender role expectations. Although her quotations are fairly brief she does appear to appreciate the issues involved.

Laxmi is openly outspoken against the expectations which her parents have of her. She appears quite certain that her mother experienced more freedom in India as an adolescent than Laxmi has in England.

Niru's account of students going for a drink to the Reinwood pub during the day illustrates one strategy used by girls to reject parental norms and yet still appear to be leading an acceptable college life. The pub is so far from the main areas of Asian residence that discovery by parents is relatively unlikely.

It seems reasonable therefore to generate a category based on the general critique of accepted gender norms of behaviour. One might term it "traditional gender-role rejection".

In terms of language it is a matter of considerable regret that Asian students appear to develop competence in spoken English more easily than in written English. An example

of this is the evidence of Amritlal who although highly articulate orally was only able to produce a limited and ungrammatical piece of prose.

In addition, Satya was able to generate lively and interesting descriptions of life in India, yet his ability to write English was so limited that he spent the greater part of most lessons quietly trying to disguise the fact that he was unable to write anything grammatical.

It was evident here that oral competence was tending to masquerade the inability to write coherent prose. This must be a major issue to be addressed in multi-cultural education, if in fact the phenomenon can be generalised to other ethnic groups.

This theoretical category which relates to language competence may be termed "differential linguistic competence".

Therefore starting from the original ethnographic data a number of generalisations can be made, which are firmly grounded in empirical observation. These observations are of different kinds but all contribute to the theoretical categories which have been induced from the observations and generalisations. The theoretical categories can now be used to construct a theory of the world view of Hindu students. As B Glaser and A Strauss write:

This is an inductive method of theory development. To make theoretical sense of so much diversity in his data, the analyst is forced to develop ideas on a level of generality higher in conceptual abstraction than the qualitative material being analysed. He is forced to bring out underlying uniformities and diversities, and to use more abstract concepts to account for differences in the data.<sup>6</sup>

The central theoretical category is that of the Hindu vision - the notion that there is a distinctive Hindu world view. Linked to this is the category of culture value. Hindu vision is not simply a distinct world view, but a world view which is at the same time significant.

The category of educational orientation has been noted throughout the study, even with students of limited potential to achieve. Although there are exceptions in the data, generally speaking there was evident a respect for teachers and the institutions of learning.

Linked with the category of Educational Orientation is that of Educational Achievement. The students are not only very highly motivated to achieve, but appear to act as if the only obstacle to success is hard work and devotion. There were perhaps exceptions to this view of education - for example, Niru, - but it appears to have been generally accepted. The need for certification is in effect a sub-set category of Educational Achievement.

Most of the students had a clear concept of education as having a functional purpose. It was a means to an end, and this approach is reflected in the theoretical category - educational pragmatism.

It is clear that parents were very concerned about the educational performance of their children. There were apparently various reasons for this other than the normal parental concern for their childrens' progress. This particular dimension resulted in the category parental concern in education.

There is evidence of a clear desire to succeed which is not exclusively related to educational success. It closely approximates to an apparent urge to gain social status.

There are, however, clear interconnections here with the categories of Educational achievement and Educational pragmatism.

The proposed category of a racism threshold seeks to indicate the apparent pragmatic tolerance of a certain degree of racist comment, before action of some kind is contemplated. This category appears to reflect the degree of pragmatism which emerges in much of the conduct of the students.

The female students interviewed demonstrated a clear traditional gender role rejection, and with many of the students there was evidence of better oral linguistic competence than written competence. This differential linguistic competence may be a significant factor in explaining the relatively poor academic performance of some of the Asian students.

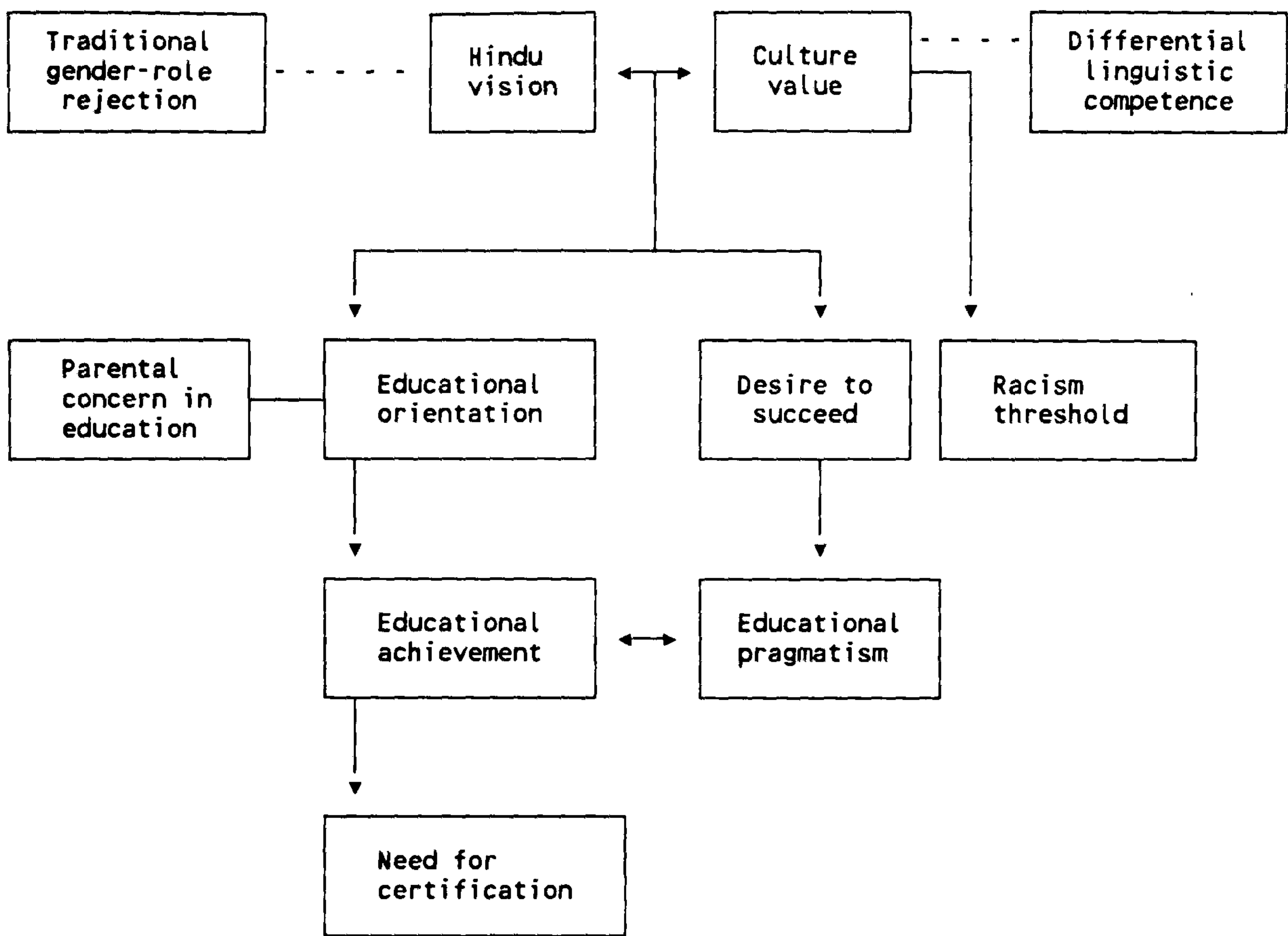
We can see therefore the relationships between some of these theoretical categories and the way in which they are derived from the data. The category relationships are shown in diagrammatic form on the next page. This integrated theoretical framework represents what Glaser and Strauss term a "discussional" theory rather than a "propositional theory".<sup>7</sup> It is a set of theoretical relationships which are ever-changing and evolving, yet represent a form of understanding of the social culture of the sample.

This relationship of categories does not quite fit the positivistic definition of scientific theory:

Theories in social science have two functions: (i) to explain how things have worked in the past, and (ii) to predict how those things will work in the future.<sup>8</sup>



Possible relationships between the theoretical categories



The broken lines indicate linkages which are perhaps more tenuous.

This diagram in no way seeks to reify relationships between the categories, but merely to suggest the possible connections. For example, the desire on the part of students to obtain formal qualifications with national certification appears to be a more specific manifestation of the general wish to achieve and progress within the education system.

In qualitative research, it is not easy to 'explain' data. In terms of the category desire to succeed for example, we might argue that the natural urge of an immigrant community to establish themselves is an important factor, while another influence might be that of a social system rooted in caste organisation and therefore closely related to social status.

On the other hand there is a considerable amount of predictive potential in this theory, particularly in relation to the education system. The current generalisations and categories suggest an enormous number of further hypotheses which could be tested in a deductive manner by amassing further data.

One might, for example, investigate further the category of educational achievement and in particular the notion of Hindu students working towards goals for which there seems a restricted opportunity of success.

One might generate a hypothesis such that: "Hindu students often have over-ambitious educational aspirations because of a need to prove their worth in alien British society".

It would be interesting to gather quantitative data on the extent to which Hindu students actually succeed in their educational and vocational aspirations; and also qualitative data which might seek to reveal the extent of a sense of cultural alienation and how this might relate to unrealistic ambition. These observations, while shedding light on this particular hypothesis, would also contribute to a possible reassessment of the original category of educational achievement.

This thesis thus represents only a tentative beginning. It seeks to map out a provisional theoretical framework for the way of life of Hindu students. There is a great need for more in-depth studies which explore the individual categories and extend and re-define them. It seems appropriate now to recall a theme which has been reiterated time and again throughout the thesis. Geoffrey Driver and Roger Ballard wrote at the conclusion of a piece of research:

'South Asian' and 'English', the categorical labels which we have used, are of course extremely crude, and more sensitive analysis would need to be ordered in terms of much smaller operational groupings such as Ramgarhia Sikhs or Gujarati Muslims. Such investigations would probably need to be much more ethnographic than statistical in their foundations.<sup>9</sup>

It is to be hoped that this study goes some way towards assisting in this goal.

## POSTSCRIPT: DESTINATIONS OF STUDENTS

### Students starting college in 1986

#### Hari

In 1987, after passing his CPVE course he progressed to a BTEC National Diploma in Art and Design. His tutors on this course described him as the outstanding student of his year. After this two-year course he was intending to embark on a degree course in Art.

#### Mohan

He passed his CPVE and progressed to the BTEC First Diploma in Mechanical Engineering, which he successfully completed.

#### Narain

Narain successfully completed his CPVE year, but then left college. When contacted in 1988 he had not established himself in a full-time job.

#### Pushpa

After passing CPVE, she continued to the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies, and subsequently to the BTEC National Diploma.

#### Rajesh

After passing CPVE, Rajesh progressed to the BTEC First Diploma in Science, but he failed to complete this one-year course, and left college at Easter 1988. Six months later he was still unemployed.

#### Ramesh

He successfully completed the CPVE course gaining A grades in both 'O' level English and Mathematics. He was admitted directly to the BTEC National Diploma in Business Studies but left after a few months to take up a job with a bank.



Students starting college in 1987

Balwant

Balwant passed the CPVE course and progressed to the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies.

Kumar

He passed the CPVE course and progressed to the BTEC first Diploma in Business Studies.

Laxmi

After successfully completing CPVE she continued to the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies but had the intention of joining her father's business at some stage.

Purshottham

After CPVE, Purshottham progressed to the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies but continued to work part-time in an Indian restaurant.

Ramila

Ramila passed her CPVE and progressed to the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies.

Ratilal

He appeared to have difficulties with his work on the CPVE course, and later in the year had long periods of absence from college. He failed the course for this reason and six months later had not developed a career plan.

### Shanti

He passed his CPVE course and progressed to the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies.

### Subhash

Subhash successfully completed his CPVE course and continued to the BTEC First Diploma in Business Studies, while continuing to work part-time at a large store.

### Students starting college in 1988

#### Amritlal

He passed his CPVE course but left college then to work in the shop in which he had been working part-time.

#### Niru

She passed her CPVE programme but then left college to work for the 'fast-food' company at which she had previously been employed.

#### Rajendra

He passed the CPVE course and continued to the BTEC First Diploma in Mechanical Engineering.

#### Satya

Satya successfully completed his CPVE course but then left college as a full-time student. He re-enrolled for a part-time course in English and continued to work at the job in 'packaging' which he had held before.

## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

1. Many illustrations of this practice are detailed in Chapter 3; but see for example, P Kinder, 'College Policy and Practice: the view of a principal', *Coombe Lodge Report*, 16, No 2 (1983), 89-94.
2. A M Baker, 'Asians are not all alike', *New Society*, 2, No 11 (1978), 274-275 (p274).
3. M J Taylor with S Hegarty, *The Best of Both Worlds ...? A Review of Research into the Education of Pupils of South Asian Origin*, (Windsor, 1985), p538.

Section 14, pp533-541, of this work is devoted to a discussion of research methods in this area.

4. M J Taylor with S Hegarty, p538.
5. This is the famous religious interpolation from the Hindu epic, the *Mahābhārata*. It is primarily an ethical text which records the holy figure Kṛṣṇa's advice to Arjuna on the eve of battle, when the latter must enter into combat with close friends and relatives. It is widely revered by Hindus from all parts of India.
6. J Griffiths, *Asian Links*, (London, 1982), p48. The interviewer was Towyn Mason, a former BBC correspondent in Pakistan, and the interviewee was Pranal Sheth, former Deputy Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality.
7. J P Wiseman, 'The Research Web', in *Social Research: Principles and Procedures*, edited by J Bynner and K M Stribley, (London, 1978), pp113-121 (p113).
8. S J Ball, 'Beachside Reconsidered: Reflections on a Methodological Apprenticeship', in *The Research Process in Educational Settings*, edited by R G Burgess, (Lewes, 1984), pp68-96 (p74).
9. The source for this figure is the 1981 Census. Demographic figures are quoted in this chapter in order to set the scene for the research.
10. These figures are based upon the 1981 Census and in particular the enumeration of people living in households where the head of the household was born in the New Commonwealth or Pakistan. A more recent estimate of the ethnic minority population of England and Wales is 4.5 per cent, based on the Labour Force Survey carried out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, between 1984 and 1986 inclusive; see: Central Statistical Office, *Social Trends 18*, (London, 1988), p27.
11. A survey by the local Community Relations Council indicates that about six per cent of the total population of Churchtown are Muslims. Hindus and West Indians each account for about 1.5 per cent. There is a small Sikh community.
12. Panjabi and Gujarāṭi belong to the Indo-Aryan group of languages derived from Sanskrit. Telugu, however, is a Dravidian language, spoken from Madras northwards to the borders of Orissa.

13. In Indian mythology the invention of both Sanskrit and the *Devanāgarī* script was attributed to Sarasvatī, the goddess of art, music and literature. The cult of Sarasvatī is maintained to this day and has significance for modern Hindus.
14. For further information on the language, see: H V Vyas, 'Gujarāti language and literature', *Commission for Racial Equality Education Journal*, 4, No 1 (1982), p8.
15. M H Lyon, 'Ethnicity in Britain: the Gujarāti Tradition', *New Community*, 2 (1973), 1-11 (p7).
16. M H Lyon, p9.
17. A well-known example is M K Gāndhī, born in Porbandar, who travelled as a young man to study law at the Inns of Court in London.
18. R Jackson, 'The Shree Krishna Temple and the Gujarati Hindu Community in Coventry', in *Hinduism in England*, edited by D G Bowen, (Bradford, 1981), pp61-85 (p63).
19. *Chandogya Upaniṣad*, iii, 17, 6.

'This highest knowledge, the knowledge of Brahman, having drunk of which one never thirsts, did Ghora Angirasa teach to Krishna, the son of Devaki.'

This translation from: S Prabhavananda and F Manchester, *The Upanishads*, (New York, 1957), p65.

20. The *brāhmaṇa* was the priestly class which along with the other three classes of warrior, peasant and serf, evolved during the period of the *Ṛg Veda*. These groupings still retain social significance. The Sanskrit word for these classes is *varṇa* which means 'colour', and is a reference to the tribal and cultural origins of the different groups. The word is frequently translated as 'caste', although this constitutes a slight inaccuracy.
21. It is frequently the first symbol of *mantras* - short religious chants. The best known example is the *Gāyatrī mantra*, a verse of the *Ṛg Veda* addressed to the ancient sun god Savitṛ.
22. In Hindu mythology, the cow is an incarnation of one of the heavenly nymphs known as the *Apsarases*, and the fact that this incarnation was ordained by the God Viṣṇu, explains the importance of the cow in Indian religious practice.
23. Members of the Swaminārāyan community regularly attend the centre, mostly for social and sporting events, although they would be free to pray in the shrine room as well. The nearby Swaminārāyan temple is however in practice, restricted to that sect.
24. *Shree* is an honorific prefix.

*Akshar* is from the Sanskrit '*aksara*' meaning 'home of the supreme person'.

*Purushottam* is from the Sanskrit '*purusottama*' meaning 'the highest divine reality'.



25. A copy of the *Shikshapatri*, a small orange booklet of about eighty pages, is carried by all devotees.  
  
The latest edition is:  
  
Shree Sahajanand Swami, *Shikshapatri: a compendium of the Code of Conduct*, (Ahmedabad, 1984).  
  
Sahajanand was the founder's original name before he adopted the name Swaminarayan.
26. The original sources are discussed in:  
  
R B Williams, *A New Face of Hinduism*, (London, 1984), p1 and R B Williams, 'Presentation of the Shikshapatri to Sir John Malcolm', in *New Dimensions in Vedanta Philosophy*, edited by R S Srivastava, (Ahmedabad, 1981) I, pp114-122.
27. The gurus of the movement after Swaminārāyan have been: Swāmī Gunatitanand; Bhagatī Maharaj; Shastriī Maharaj; Yogīī Maharaj; and the present leader Pramukh Swāmī.
28. See R B Pandya, *Pramukh Swāmī Maharaj* (Nairobi, 1974), p28.
29. Shree Sahajanand Swāmī, pp10-11.
30. See R B Williams, (1984), pp142-146.
31. Shree Sahajanand Swami, pp19-20 and p23.
32. *Jatī* are the many occupational and trade groupings which are normally termed castes. Unlike *varṇa* they are mentioned little in ancient sources, and are a comparatively recent social development.
33. R B Williams, (1984), p147.
34. A *sādhū* is traditionally a homeless, itinerant ascetic. In this sense the best translation would probably be a 'monk'. "*Sādhūs*" in the movement undertake social work and teaching duties, in addition to devotional practices.
35. The main criterion for determining the size of a college is the 'unit total'. This is a function of the total student hours for the previous academic year. For a college to be classed as Group 8, it must have a unit total of between 5001 and 6500. The most useful summary of FE regulations is: I Waitt, *College Administration*, (London, 1980).
36. A B Cotterell and E W Heley (eds.), *Tertiary: A radical approach to Post-compulsory education*, (Cheltenham, 1981), pp10-11.
37. M Preedy, 'Tertiary Colleges: Some Organizational Issues', in *Approaches to Post-school Management*, edited by O Boyd-Barrett et al, (London, 1983), pp204-218 (p213).
38. The exact source of this quotation is not given because of the desire to maintain anonymity.
39. Joint Board for Pre-Vocational Education, *The Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education: Consultative Document*, (London, 1984), p4.

40. Joint Board for Pre-Vocational Education, p2.
41. Further Education Unit, *CPVE 8*, (London, 1985), p1.
42. These categories are: Personal and Career Development; Industrial, Social and Environmental Studies; Communication; Social Skills; Numeracy; Science and Technology; Information Technology; Creative Development; Practical Skills; Problem Solving.
43. Further Education Unit, *CPVE 5*, (London, 1985), p2.
44. These areas are: Business and Administrative Services; Technical Services; Production; Distribution; Services to People.
45. A good summary of the organisation of CPVE and comments upon the early stages of its development are in:  
  
P Jennings, *CPVE - The First Year*, (Lancaster, 1987).
46. Hindu students have constituted approximately ten per cent of the CPVE enrolments during the period of the research study.
47. FEU, *Progression from CPVE*, (London, 1987), p ix.

## CHAPTER 1 METHODOLOGY

1. R King, 'No Best Method - Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Sociology of Education', in *Doing Sociology of Education*, edited by G Walford, (London, 1987), pp231-246 (p243).
2. G Burrell and G Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*, (Aldershot, 1987), p253.
3. H Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, (New Jersey, 1967), p36.
4. M Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, translated by A M Henderson and T Parsons, (New York, 1964), pp89-90.
5. M Weber, pp92-93.
6. G H Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, (Chicago, 1967), p135.
7. A Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, translated by G Walsh and F Lehnert, (London, 1980), p5.
8. A Schutz, p9.
9. A Schutz, p9.
10. E Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, translated by D Carr, (Evanston, 1970), p260.
11. E Husserl, p261.
12. E Husserl, p264.
13. A Schutz, pp174-175.
14. H Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, (New Jersey, 1967), p1.
15. H Garfinkel, p11.
16. H Garfinkel, p10.
17. H Garfinkel, p4.
18. A V Cicourel, *Method and Measurement in Sociology*, (New York, 1964).
19. A V Cicourel, p79.
20. A V Cicourel, p79.
21. P L Berger and T Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, (Harmondsworth, 1975), p187.
22. E Schegloff and H Sacks, 'Opening Up Closings', in *Ethnomethodology*, edited by R Turner, (Harmondsworth, 1974), pp233-258 (p234).
23. K Leiter, *A Primer on Ethnomethodology*, (New York, 1980), p238.

24. G Griffiths, 'Doubts, Dilemmas and Diary-Keeping: Some Reflections on Teacher-Based Research', in *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*, edited by R G Burgess, (London, 1985), pp197-215 (p211).
25. W F Whyte, *Street Corner Society*, (Chicago, 1943), p357.
26. D H Hargreaves, *Social Relations in a Secondary School*, (London, 1973), p202.
27. J Platt, 'On interviewing one's peers', *British Journal of Sociology*, 32 (1981), 75-91 (p81).
28. H S Becker, 'Problems in the Publication of Field Studies', in *Issues in Participant Observation*, edited by G J McCall and J L Simmons, (Reading, Mass., 1969), pp260-275 (p263).
29. W F Whyte, 'Interviewing in Field Research', in *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, edited by R G Burgess, (London, 1982), pp111-121 (p114).
30. A Pollard, 'Studying Children's Perspectives - A Collaborative Approach', in *Doing Sociology of Education*, edited by G Walford, (London, 1987), pp95-118 (p95).
31. N K Denzin, *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, (New York, 1978), p215.
32. N K Denzin, p294.
33. M Hammersley, J Scarth and S Webb, 'Developing and Testing Theory: The Case of Research on Pupil Learning and Examinations' in *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*, edited by R G Burgess, (London, 1985), pp48-66 (p54).
34. M Hammersley, 'From Ethnography to Theory: A Programme and Paradigm in the Sociology of Education', *Sociology*, 19 (1985) 244-259 (p253).
35. B G Glaser and A L Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, (New York, 1967), p45.
36. Glaser and Strauss, p45.
37. Glaser and Strauss, p49.
38. Glaser and Strauss, p48.
39. Glaser and Strauss, p40.
40. Glaser and Strauss, p32.
41. K R Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, (London, 1980), p27.
42. Popper, p47.



## CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. F Reeves, 'Race Relations: Ideology and Practice in Further Education', *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 7, No 2, (Summer, 1983), 56-67 (p64).
2. M J Taylor with S Hegarty, *The Best of both worlds ...? A Review of Research into the Education of Pupils of South Asian Origin*, (Windsor, 1985), p325.
3. DES., *NAFE: Non-advanced Further Education in Practice*, (London, 1987), p14.
4. M Craft and A Craft, 'The Participation of Ethnic Minority Pupils in Further and Higher Education', *Educational Research*, 25, No 1 (February, 1983), 10-19.
5. Craft and Craft, p10.
6. B Parekh, 'The Education Maze', *New Society*, (21 August, 1987), p26.
7. H Vyas, 'Education and Cognitive Styles: A Case Study of Gujarati Children in Britain, Eastern United States, and India', in *Multicultural Childhood*, edited by C Bagley and G K Verma, (Aldershot, 1983), p38.
8. Community Relations Commission, *A Second Chance: Further Education in Multi-Racial Areas*, (London, 1976), p5.
9. T Lupton and C Cleaver, 'Multi-Ethnic Education: the need for a mechanism', *Commission for Racial Equality, Education Journal*, 5, No 2 (May, 1983), p11.
10. Commission for Racial Equality, *Further Education in a Multi-Racial Society: A Policy Report*, (London, 1985), p4.
11. FEU, *Curriculum Development for a Multicultural Society: Policy and Curriculum*, (London, 1985), p17.
12. R Singh, 'Organization of Multiculturalism in a College', *Multiracial Education*, 12, No 2, (1984), 15-23 (p17).
13. A Craft and G Klein, *Agenda for Multicultural Teaching*, (York, 1986), p73.
14. M Broome, 'Meeting their needs: vocational preparation in a multicultural society', *Commission for Racial Equality, Education Journal*, 3, No 3 (1981), 9-10 (p10).
15. W Ball, *Policy Innovation on Multicultural Education in 'Eastshire' Local Education Authority*, (Warwick, 1986), p29.
16. *Education for All: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups*, Chairman: Lord Swann. Cmnd. 9453, (London, 1985). The Swann Report.
17. *Education for All*, pvii.
18. FEU, *FEU Response to Education for All: the Report of the Swann Committee on the Education of children from Ethnic Minority Groups*, (London, 1985), p1.
19. *FEU Response to Education for All*, p2.
20. D Driver, 'Education for All - including those in Further Education', in *Multicultural Education for All*, edited by B Taylor, (Exeter, 1985), pp73-77 (p73).

21. Driver, p74.
22. *Education for All*, p110.
23. *Education for All*, p65.
24. *Education for All*, p116.
25. *Education for All*, p176.
26. *Education for All*, p181.
27. G Verma and B Ashworth, 'Education and Occupational aspirations of young South Asians in Britain', in *World Yearbook of Education, 1981: Education of Minorities*, edited by J Megarry, (London, 1981), pp240-253.
28. Verma and Ashworth, p248.
29. G Verma, K Mallick, and B Ashworth, 'The Role of Attitude and Experience in the transition from school to work in young South Asians in Britain', in *Multicultural Childhood*, edited by C Bagley and G Verma, (Aldershot, 1983), pp98-107 (p103).
30. C Wright, 'Black students - White teachers', in *Racial Inequality in Education*, edited by B Troyna, (London, 1987), pp109-126, (p114).
31. C A Baker and K C Thomas, 'The Participation of Ethnic Minority students in a college of Further Education', *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 9, No 1 (Spring, 1985), 47-55 (p49).
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38. S Tomlinson, 'The Educational performance of ethnic minority children', *New Community*, 8, No 3 (1980), 213-234.
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40. G K Verma, 'The Problems of Vocational Adaptation of 'Asian' Adolescents in Britain: some theoretical and methodological issues', in *Self-concept, Achievement and Multicultural Education*, edited by G K Verma and C Bagley, (London, 1982), 83-97 (p85).

41. Verma, p90.
42. Verma, p95.
43. FEU/NUS, *FE can really change your life*, (London, 1987).
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45. FEU/NUS, p3.
46. FEU/NUS, p6.
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48. FEU/NUS, p7.
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51. FEU/NUS, p31.
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54. Community Relations Commission, p38.
55. S Tomlinson, *Home and School in Multicultural Britain*, (London, 1984).
56. P A S Ghuman and R Gallop, 'Educational Attitudes of Bengali Families in Cardiff', *Journal of Multicultural and Multilingual Development*, 2, No 2, (1981), 9-19 (p12).
57. J Matthew, 'Asian women and Further Education', *Commission for Racial Equality Education Journal*, 5, No 3, (November, 1983), 1-4 (p3).
58. D Hiro, *The Indian Family in Britain*, (London, 1969).
59. A Murray, 'Curriculum Development for a Multicultural Society: an FEU perspective', *Commission for Racial Equality Education Journal*, 7, No 2, (September, 1984), 9-10 (p10).
60. P M Foster, *Policy and Practice in Multicultural and anti-racist education - a case-study of a multi-ethnic comprehensive school*, unpublished PhD thesis, Open University, 1988.
61. J Pankhania, *The Implementation of Anti-racist policy in Further Education institutions in Manchester*, unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Manchester, 1988.
62. R Arora, Reaching the Whole College, in *NATFHE Journal* (July/August, 1984) 43-44 (P43).



63. D Dunn, 'Black Youth, the Youth Training Scheme and the Choice at 16 +', *Multiracial Education*, 11, No 3 (1983) 7-22 (p7).
64. P Mackney, 'Mobilising against the racism in YTS', *NATFHE Journal*, 10, No 8, (December, 1985), 12-17 (p12).
65. Commission for Racial Equality, *Learning in Terror. A Survey of Racial Harassment in schools and colleges in England, Scotland and Wales, 1985-1987*, (London, 1988).
66. Commission for Racial Equality, *Learning in Terror*, p8.
67. Commission for Racial Equality, *Between Two Cultures: A Study of Relationships between generations in the Asian community in Britain*, (London, 1978).
68. Commission for Racial Equality, *Between Two Cultures*, p30.
69. Commission for Racial Equality, *Between Two Cultures*, p68.
70. NATFHE, *Multicultural Education*, (London, 1982).
71. NATFHE, p6.
72. M I Hammersley, *A Peculiar World? Teaching and Learning in an Inner-city school*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Manchester, 1980, p69.
73. Hammersley, p69.
74. V Marett, *East African Asian Immigrant Students in Further Education Colleges*. Unpublished MEd thesis, University of Leicester, 1976.
75. Marett, p108.
76. Marett, p108.



### CHAPTER 3 THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

1. The approximate dates of conversational data are given in order to provide a sense of chronology.
2. This is a fictional name for the Roman Catholic-aided Further Education college in Churchtown.
3. This is a fictional name for a local Roman Catholic-aided High School.
4. The most effective sanction is normally to withhold the student's termly maintenance award. The latter is conditional upon satisfactory behaviour, attendance and academic progress, and at 1986 values was worth about one hundred and fifty pounds.
5. The difficulties associated with mixed-ability teaching are heightened on CPVE because of the wide ability range. There are no entry qualifications for the course, and whereas some students may have attended special schools, others are capable of progressing to BTEC National Diploma level.
6. This is a general methodological issue in much interview research of this kind. It is further discussed in the reflexive account.
7. A large commercial company which acted as Managing Agent for a YTS scheme involving office-based training.
8. Information Technology.
9. The re-definition of reality is discussed in P Berger and T Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, (Harmandsworth, 1979), pp183-200.
10. In India the windows of trains sometimes have no glass, merely steel security bars.
11. Fictional name for a YTS scheme in the centre of Churchtown.

## CHAPTER 4 APPROACHES TO RELIGION

1. *Holi* is the harvest thanksgiving festival of northern and central India. The spring wheat is harvested at this time and it is an occasion for singing, fun and merry-making. The festival takes its name from Hōlika, in Indian mythology. She was the daughter of the king Harna Kashyāp who plotted to kill his son Prahlād for being too religious. Hōlika saved her brother with the help of the Gods. *Hōli* symbolically represents the triumph of Good over Evil.
2. This term derives from the Sanskrit *rakṣitr* (protector) and *bandhū* (kinsman).
3. Matajī (honoured mother) is the wife of Śiva in her benevolent aspect. In the temple her image consisted of a marble figure of a six-armed goddess, riding a ferocious tiger, clasping a flower in one hand and weapons in the others. The goddess may also be known as Ambajī. Jalaram Bāpā represents Śiva.
4. Snake-spirits (Nāga) are very ancient objects of worship, and the cult is today widespread in India. They are usually represented as a human torso with a snake's tail. In mythology the spirits dwelt in the underground city of Bhogavatī and guarded great treasures.
5. Ganeśa is one of the best-known Indian deities and is the second son of Śiva and Parvati. He is portrayed with an elephant's head, one broken tusk and a large stomach.
6. A Schutz, *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, 1962), p23.
7. This is consecrated food, which having been offered to the deity is distributed to the congregation. It is made of flour, sugar, milk and other special ingredients depending upon the occasion. The word derives from the Sanskrit *praśādah* meaning a favour, or gracious gift.
8. A Schutz, *Collected Papers I*, p218.
9. Kālī (the Black One) is the Mother Goddess in her grim aspect. She is also sometimes referred to as Durga (the Inaccessible One).
10. Matajī is portrayed with eight arms, as Narain correctly states earlier.
11. *Divālī* or *Dīpavālī* derives from the Sanskrit *dīpika* meaning a lamp. The festival falls in the October/November period, and on the night of *Divālī* according to tradition, Lakṣmī the Goddess of good fortune and prosperity, visits only those homes which are lit by the lights of many lamps.
12. *Navratrī*, the festival of nine nights, is unique to Gujarāt and is celebrated with gaiety throughout this cultural region. People dress up in their best clothes and dedicate themselves to Matajī. The festival is accompanied by dancing and the singing of ballads.
13. H Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, (Englewood Cliffs, 1967), p33.
14. H Garfinkel, p277.
15. A fictional name for the large theatre complex in the centre of Churchtown.

16. *Artī* is a sacred ritual which is performed several times a day at the temple. A dish containing five lighted lamps is rotated by the priest in a clockwise direction in front of a deity. The dish is then passed among the congregation who pass their hands over the flame and then over their heads in a symbolic act of accepting God's blessing.
17. A Schutz, *Collected Papers I*, p17.
18. Hanumant is the monkey God; in mythology the son of Vayu and servant of Rama. He is worshipped in many shrines in the form of a monkey with a human body. He is regarded as a popular guardian spirit.
19. J Bar-Hillel, "Indexical Expressions", *Mind* 63, (1954), 359-379 (p363).
20. The gesture of bringing the palms of the hands together as a form of greeting. From the Sanskrit *namaskarah* - making obeisance.
21. A major philosopher from Southern India (?788-820 CE) who in a short lifetime travelled extensively in India, wrote seminal commentaries on the principal *Upaniṣads* and founded an order of Hindu monks.

## CHAPTER 5 ACADEMIC PROGRESS

1. J Eggleston, 'The Educational and Vocational Experiences of young black Britons', *Multicultural Teaching*, 4, No 1, (1985), 6-10 (p7).
2. A Brah, 'South Asian teenagers in Southall: their perceptions of marriage, family and ethnic identity', *New Community*, 6, (1978), 197-206 (p199).
3. D Brooks and K Singh, *Aspirations versus Opportunities - Asian and White school leavers in the Midlands*, (London, 1978), p71.
4. Mr Robin (fictional name) is the deputy Head of Department.
5. A discussion of mother-tongue teaching in Further Education can be found in:  
  
S Johnson, 'The Role of the Local Education Authority in Multiethnic Education', *Coombe Lodge Report*, 16, No 2, (1983), 69-78, (p75).
6. FEU, *Black Perspectives on FE provision*, (London, 1985), p11.
7. Further Education Unit and National Union of Students, *FE can really change your life*, (London, 1987), p10.
8. G C F Payne, 'Making a lesson happen: an ethnomethodological analysis', in *The Process of Schooling*, edited by M Hammersley and P Woods, (London, 1976), pp33-40, (p34).
9. A V Cicourel, 'Police Practices and Official Records', in *Ethnomethodology*, edited by R Turner (Harmondsworth, 1974), pp85-95 (p95).
10. Fictional name for a tutor on the CPVE programme.
11. Ashraf is a fictional name for a Muslim student in the 1988/89 CPVE year group.
12. Young Enterprise is a national, registered charity which provides tuition and experience in setting up small businesses. It is staffed by part-time volunteers who are working in business (eg. bank managers) who provide the expertise. Students raise capital by selling Young Enterprise shares and found a small business which normally lasts one year. Profits are usually donated to charity.
13. A school pupil (fictional name).
14. A college lecturer (fictional name).
15. The issue of parental attitudes is discussed in:  
  
L Cohen and L Manion, *Perspectives on Classrooms and Schools*, (London, 1981), pp263-265.



## CHAPTER 6 VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND THE WORLD OF WORK

1. K Leiter, *A Primer on Ethnomethodology*, (New York, 1980), p159.
2. FEU, *Curriculum Development for a Multicultural Society*, (London 1985), p21.
3. K Leiter, p161.
4. L Cohen and L Manion, *Multicultural Classrooms*, (London, 1983), p60.
5. A Schutz, *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, 1962), p14.
6. The importance of this social stock of knowledge is discussed in:  
  
G Hitchcock and D Hughes, *Research and the Teacher*, (London, 1989), p158.
7. The issue of high expectations in relation to vocations is discussed in:  
  
B Fowler, B Littlewood and R Madigan, 'Immigrant School leavers and the search for work', *Sociology*, 11, 1 (1977), 65-85.
8. A study by Y P Gupta suggested that in a contrasted sample, more Asian than English boys aspired to a career of higher social status than their fathers; see Y P Gupta, 'The Educational and Vocational aspirations of Asian immigrants and English school-leavers', *British Journal of Sociology*, 28 (1977), 195-198.

CHAPTER 7 RACE AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

- 1. R Winter, *Learning from Experience*, (Lewes, 1989), p23.
- 2. D H Zimmerman, 'The Practicalities of Rule Use', in *Understanding Everyday Life*, edited by J Douglas, (Chicago, 1970), p233.
- 3. A Dorn, 'Education and the Race Relations Act', in *Race and Gender: Equal Opportunities Policies in Education*, edited by M Arnot, (Oxford, 1985), p17.
- 4. Dorn, p17.
- 5. The distinction is sometimes made between "racist" and "racialist". The Macdonald Inquiry into racism in Manchester schools sought to define these terms as precisely as possible:

<i>Racialism.</i>	Refers to prejudiced beliefs and behaviour based on race, colour or ethnicity.
<i>Racism.</i>	The doctrine that an individual or his or her behaviour is determined by stable inherited characteristics deriving from separate racial stocks, having distinctive attributes, and usually standing in relations of "superiority" and "inferiority".

See: I Macdonald et al. *Murder in the Playground. The Report of the Macdonald Inquiry into racism and racial violence in Manchester Schools*, (London, 1989), p43.

A commonly accepted manner of defining racism is provided by the FEU: "racism equals prejudice plus power".

See: FEU, *Curriculum Development for a Multicultural Society*, (London, 1985), p32.

In this study the term 'racist' is used, firstly because it is more common in current literature and secondly because of the view that in most relevant contexts in this work, an element of 'power' is involved: that is, the power to act in the manner described.

- 6. The assessment process of CPVE includes a detailed formative profile consisting of a large number of competences related to the core areas. The students were expected to obtain lecturers' signatures throughout the year, indicating when and how they had attained these competences. It was not necessary to have all the competences validated in a particular core area, but to attain a reasonable cross-section from all the different core areas:

For examples of CPVE competences see:

BTEC/City and Guilds of London Institute, *CPVE: Issues of Practice*, London, 1988), p13.

- 7. A survey of the issue of racial harassment, including name-calling, is contained in:

CRE, *Learning in Terror: A survey of racial harassment in schools and colleges*, (London, 1988).

8. For a discussion of the use of this kind of language, see Runnymede Trust, *Racism, Anti-racism and Schools: a summary of the Burnage Report*, (London, 1989), Chapter 3, pp13-20.
9. *Education for All*. The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups. (The Swann Report), Cmnd. 9453, (London, 1985), p35.
10. This was not the real abusive name which the lecturer used, because Purshottham was, of course, not the student's actual name. The actual name used was similarly an adaptation of the first name of the student.
11. D Barnes and F Todd, 'Talk in small learning groups: Analysis of Strategies', in *Uttering, Muttering*, edited by C Adelman, (London, 1981), pp69-77, (p75).
12. Barnes and Todd, p75.
13. *Education for All*, p15.
14. Signifying that he had memorised the Holy Quran.

## CHAPTER 8 GENDER ROLES

1. A useful discussion of gender roles is contained in:  
S Delamont, *The Sociology of Women*, (London, 1980), Chapter 2, pp14-32.
2. S Tomlinson, *Home and School in Multicultural Britain*, (London, 1984), p29.
3. Several accounts of the position of women in India are contained in:  
M Davies (ed), *Third World - Second Sex: Women's Struggles and National Liberation*, (London, 1983).

The general argument presented is that of the low status of women:

Hindu scriptures proclaim that the girl herself is the most precious of gifts 'presented' by her father to her husband. Thus the money transaction between families is bound up with the marriage transaction whereby the girl becomes a piece of transferable property. (p205).

4. D Killingley and others (eds), *A Handbook of Hinduism for Teachers*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1984), p45.
5. Killingley, p45.
6. N Nelson, *Why has Development neglected rural women?*, (Oxford, 1979), p73.
7. P Parmar, 'Gender, Race and Power: The Challenge to Youth Work Practice', in *Multi-Racist Britain*, edited by P Cohen and H S Bains, (London, 1988), pp197-210 (p208).
8. An analysis of teacher talk in relation to black students is contained in:  
C Wright, 'Black students - white teachers', in *Racial Inequality in Education*, edited by B Troyna, (London, 1987), pp109-126.
9. P Sammons and K Newbury, *Ethnic Monitoring in Further and Higher Education*, (London, 1989), p14.

The levels allocated to courses in the quotation, refer to the Burnham Committee grading system.



## CHAPTER 9 LANGUAGE

1. D J Smith and S Tomlinson, *The School Effect: A Study of Multi-Racial Comprehensives*, (London, 1989), p94.
2. R Kaushal, 'Mother tongue as an issue of importance', *Commission for Racial Equality Education Journal*, 3, No 2, (March, 1981), 5-6 (p5).
3. *A Language for Life*, The Report of the Committee of Inquiry under the Chairmanship of Sir Alan Bullock, FBA. HMSO, 1975, p17.
4. *A Language for Life*, p17.
5. CRE, *Further and Adult Education in a Multi-cultural society*, (London, 1981), p53.

This is the report of a conference sponsored jointly by the CRE, NATFHE and the National Association for Multiracial Education, held on the 13th and 14th March, 1981.
6. R M Dave, *Ghanashyam Charitra*, (Ahmedabad, 1975), p2.
7. D Oldman, 'Plain Speaking and pseudo-science: the 'New Right' attack on antiracism', in *Racial Inequality in Education*, edited by B Troyna, (London, 1987), pp29-43 (p41).
8. J Moran, 'Mother Tongue Anomalies', *Commission for Racial Equality Education Journal*, 2, No 1, (April, 1979), 7-11 (p7).
9. J Gundara, 'Education for a Multicultural Society', in *Racism, Diversity and Education*, edited by J Gundara and others, (London, 1986), pp4-27 (p19).
10. C Candlin and J Derrick, *Education for a Multicultural Society: Language*, (London, 1972), p26.
11. Candlin and Derrick, p26.
12. This ceremony is probably connected with that in Puri, Orissa, where annually a statue of Kṛṣṇa is carried on a very large cart, under the wheels of which some devotees traditionally flung themselves. The word juggernaut derives initially from the Hindi *jaganāth* and thence the Sanskrit *jagat* - world, and *nātha* - lord.
13. CRC, *Educational Needs of Children from Minority Groups*, (London, 1974), p15.
14. R Jeffcoate, *Ethnic Minorities and Education*, (London, 1984), p130.
15. In a survey of language use amongst Asian adults in Leicester, J Wilding suggested that English was increasingly used for communication between Asians at work.

See, J Wilding, *Ethnic Minority languages in the classroom? A survey of Asian Parents in Leicester*, (Leicester, 1981).

## CHAPTER 10 THE SUPERNATURAL

1. A L Basham notes that the *Arthaśāstra*, a treatise on state administration written in the third century BCE, records the existence of herds of diseased and aged cattle, indicating that even during this period, the cow was probably allowed to die a natural death.

See, A L Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, (New York, 1977), p195.

2. The colour black is associated with evil in Hindu iconography. The Mother Goddess in her evil form is termed *Kālī* (the "Black One"). She is often portrayed as having a black face, a red tongue hanging from her mouth, and a garland of skulls around her neck.

See, P Rawson, *Tantra: The Indian Cult of Ecstasy*, (London, 1973), p17.

3. S C Dube, *Indian Village*, (Bombay, 1967), p88.
4. Later questioning established that the oil used by men on their skin, gave a red sheen.
5. D Pocock, *Mind, Body and Wealth: A study of belief and practice in an Indian village*, (Oxford, 1973), p28.
6. There may be a straight-forward explanation for the white colour of the water; for example, the river stirring up pale-coloured sediment.
7. L S S O'Malley, *Popular Hinduism*, (Cambridge, 1936), pp156-157.

## CHAPTER 11 REFLEXIVE ACCOUNT OF THE RESEARCH

1. W F Whyte, *Street Corner Society*, (Chicago, 1943), p280.
2. Whyte, p280.
3. E C Cuff and G C F Payne (eds), *Perspectives in Sociology*, (London, 1984), p130.
4. R G Burgess (ed), *The Research Process in Educational Settings: Ten Case Studies*, (Lewes, 1984), p7.
5. J P Wiseman, 'The Research Web', in *Social Research: Principles and Procedures*, edited by J Bynner and K M Stribley, (London, 1978), pp113-121 (p113).
6. M Hammersley, 'The Researcher Exposed: A Natural History', in *The Research Process in Educational Settings*, edited by R G Burgess, (Lewes, 1984), pp39-67 (p60).
7. D H Hargreaves, *Social Relations in a Secondary School*, (London, 1973), p194.
8. S J Ball, 'Beachside Reconsidered: Reflections on a Methodological Apprenticeship', in *The Research Process in Educational Settings*, edited by R G Burgess, (Lewes, 1984), pp68-96 (p74).
9. G Turner, *The Social World of the Comprehensive School*, (London, 1983), p164.
10. E Black, *The Janus Factor: The Teacher-Ethnographer in a College of Further Education*. Paper prepared for the BERA Annual Conference, Manchester Polytechnic, 2-5 September 1987, p9.
11. M Hammersley, 'From Ethnography to Theory: A programme and paradigm in the Sociology of Education', *Sociology*, 19, No 2, (May, 1985), 244-259 (p244).
12. J Platt, 'On Interviewing one's peers', *British Journal of Sociology*, 32, No 1, (March, 1981), 75-91 (p84).
13. K F Zuga, 'Conducting Naturalistic Research in Industrial Education', *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education*, 24, No 3 (1987), 44-58 (p53).
14. W F Whyte, 'Interviewing in Field Research', in *Field Research: A sourcebook and field manual*, edited by R G Burgess, (London, 1982), pp111-116 (p111).
15. H S Becker, 'Problems in the Publication of Field Studies', in *Issues in Participant Observation*, edited by G J McCall and J L Simmons (Reading, Mass., 1969), pp260-275 (p264).
16. Becker, p266.
17. A V Cicourel, *Method and Measurement in Sociology*, (New York, 1964), p83.

## CONCLUSION

1. G Driver and R Ballard, 'Comparing Performance in multi-racial schools: South Asian pupils at 16-plus', *New Community*, 7, No 2 (1979), 143-153 (p150).
2. M Greene, 'Qualitative Research and the Uses of Literature', in *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods*, edited by R R Sherman and R B Webb, (Lewes, 1988), pp175-189 (p175).
3. C Adelman and M F D Young, 'The Assumptions of Educational Research: The last twenty years in Great Britain', in *Educational Research: Principles, Policies and Practices*, edited by M Shipman, (London, 1985), pp46-56 (p48).
4. G Hitchcock and D Hughes, *Research and the Teacher*, (London 1989), p158.
5. D Hopkins, *A Teachers' Guide to Classroom Research*, (Milton Keynes, 1985), p113.
6. B G Glaser and A L Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for qualitative research*, (New York, 1967), p114.
7. Glaser and Strauss, p115.
8. H W Smith, *Strategies for Social Research*, (New Jersey, 1975), p38.
9. Driver and Ballard, p150.



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## A SHORT GLOSSARY OF HINDU TERMS

<i>Artī</i>	An act of religious worship in a temple. Specifically it may be used to refer to the act of passing firstly before the deity and then among the congregation, a tray on which are placed a number of lighted candles. Worshippers often make a symbolic gesture of passing their hands over the flames, and then smoothing them across their face.
<i>avatara</i>	An incarnation of a God - often Viṣṇu. The best known <i>avatāras</i> of Viṣṇu are Rāma and Kṛṣṇa.
<i>Bhagavad Gītā</i>	Written approximately 500 BCE this work of eighteen short chapters constitutes perhaps the most succinct statement of later Hindu theology and ethics. It is widely read by Hindus and was M K Gāndhī's favourite religious text.
brāhmaṇ	A member of the priestly class of traditional Indian society.
<i>Devanāgarī</i>	The script in which Sanskrit and modern Hindi are written. According to tradition it was invented by the Goddess <i>Sarasvātī</i> , the patron of art, music and learning.
<i>Divālī</i>	A festival associated with the Hindu New Year in which traditionally, lighted lamps are placed in the windows of all homes. <i>Divālī</i> is particularly associated with Rāmā and Sītā.

<i>guru</i>	A religious teacher. The <i>guru</i> was traditionally a brāhmaṇ who would instruct several religious students or <i>brahmacārin</i> in his home on a full-time basis. The principal subject of study were the Vedas, which were learned by rote.
<i>Hōli</i>	A Spring-time festival of fun and merrymaking when characteristically people throw coloured powders over each other and play practical jokes. Originally, it was probably a fertility ceremony in honour of the God, Kāma.
<i>Karma</i>	The doctrine that acts or deeds performed in this existence, affect future existences. The concept is part of the general doctrine of transmigration of the soul and of reincarnation.
<i>Kṛṣṇa</i>	A hero-God regarded, in formal terms, as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Although Kṛṣṇa may represent a single historical figure, it is perhaps more plausible that the Kṛṣṇa legend represents the fusion of stories and myths deriving from a number of historical heroes.
<i>Lakṣmī</i>	The Goddess of good fortune. In mythological terms she is the wife of Viṣṇu, and is usually portrayed sitting on a lotus and attended by two elephants.
<i>mantra</i>	A short word or verse having mystical significance. The repetition of the <i>mantra</i> helps to make the mind receptive to higher spiritual states. The repetition of a <i>mantra</i> is a common practice among many Hindus. <i>Mantras</i> in common use include Ōm, Rāmā, and Hare Kṛṣṇa.

<i>namaskar</i>	The characteristic form of Hindu greeting in which the palms of the hands are placed together and pointed towards the mind and heart of the person greeted.
<i>Navratrī</i>	This word means literally 'nine nights' and is the festival when particularly Gujarātis worship the Mother Goddess.
<i>Ōm</i>	A sacred syllable of the <i>Vedas</i> , considered to represent the mystical truth of the universe. It is used as a mantra, either repeated silently or vocalised.
<i>pūja</i>	The act of worship performed at home or in a temple, in devotion to a statue of a God or Goddess. The act of <i>pūja</i> often involves making music and presenting flowers and food to the deity presumed to reside in the statue.
<i>Rādhā</i>	She was the beautiful consort of Kṛṣṇa in his youth, and they are normally worshipped together.
<i>sādhū</i>	A wandering Hindu ascetic or holy person. The <i>sādhūs</i> are the spiritual descendants of the <i>munis</i> ("silent ones") of the <i>Ṛg Veda</i> who are a group of solitary holy men clearly separate from the brāhmaṇs.
<b>Sanskrit</b>	The language of the <i>Vedas</i> . It is related to the main languages of Western Europe (with the exception of Finnish) since the Indo-European languages evolved from the dialects spoken by nomadic peoples on the southern Russian steppes some two to three thousand years BCE.

- . *sati* Literally "a virtuous woman". The practice of self-immolation of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre. A common custom in medieval India, it is now outlawed.
- . *Upaniṣad* Literally meaning the act of sitting at the feet of the guru. The *Upaniṣads* are the portion of the *Vedas* which deal with mystical knowledge concerning the relationship of human beings with the universe.
- . *varṇa* Meaning literally "colour", the word refers to the four main social classes which evolved during the Vedic period, ie. priests (*brāhmaṇa*), warriors (*Kṣatriya*); merchants (*vaiśya*) and peasants (*śūdra*).
- . Viṣṇu In Hindu mythology, Viṣṇu is accorded the status of a Universal God and is perhaps the most important figure in the Hindu pantheon. Viṣṇu's importance is emphasised in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Chapter 10.